

## EU rights and data protection bodies: new technology and data protection have to go hand in hand



*“There’s no doubt that technology can play a vital role in our lives – be it in the transition to the ‘new normal’ or when used to safeguard public health,” said FRA’s Director, **Michael O’Flaherty**. “But it has to be used correctly, respecting people’s fundamental rights and data protection principles. Our renewed cooperation with the EDPS shall help us highlight these important issues and promote rights-respecting practices in Europe.”*

*“The outbreak of Covid-19 is affecting our lives at an unprecedented pace. It is testing the resilience of our societies as we respond to this global crisis and try to contain its consequences, both in the short and in the long run,” added **Wojciech Wiewiórowski**, the European Data Protection Supervisor. “Data protection is clearly not a problem, but part of the solution.”*

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, both FRA and EDPS have been highlighting the importance of transparent, secure and voluntary use of technology to help curb the spread of the virus.

FRA's [Bulletin on fundamental rights implications of COVID-19](#) called for clear conditions for the roll-out of coronavirus contact-tracing apps, such as clear basis in law, voluntary use and no use of data for other purposes than those for which they were collected.

The EDPS is responsible in the EU for ensuring that the fundamental right to data protection is respected. To this end, it advises EU institutions and collaborates with other EU bodies, including FRA. In the past weeks, [contact tracing apps and data localisation](#) have become a constant topic in the political agenda of the Union. Such technologies may have strong consequences on EU citizens' lives and lead to growing inequalities.

In many countries, data protection authorities have been heavily involved in the design and development of contact-tracing apps, ensuring that the technology is rights-compliant.

This is ever more important as [new FRA data](#) reveal that many Europeans are unwilling to share data about themselves with public and private bodies. Some 41% do not want to share any personal data with private companies and 55% fear criminals or fraudsters accessing their personal data.

FRA and EDPS will continue working together in the future to put data protection issues in the spotlight.

With the entering into force of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in 2018, FRA, the EDPS and the Council of Europe issued together a Handbook on [European data protection law](#). It presents and explains European data protection law in a straightforward way for those working in this area.

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## [Article – Plenary highlights: racism, EU-UK relations, future of Europe](#)



## Anti-racism protests

At the start of the session, [MEPs condemned discrimination](#) and police violence during a debate about the protests that have swept the US and EU following the killing of George Floyd. In a resolution [Parliament called for more diversity within police forces](#).

## EU-UK relations

In a resolution on future [EU-UK relations](#), MEPs expressed regret that no real progress has been achieved in the negotiations and said they will [not back a deal at any cost](#).

## Budget and recovery plans

In a [debate](#) on Wednesday, MEPs called on EU leaders to find agreement on the EU's [long-term budget](#) as soon as possible and said the European Commission's proposal on the [recovery package](#) is the bare minimum that Parliament can accept.

## Schengen

MEPs discussed ways to lift [border controls and travel restrictions in the](#)

[Schengen zone](#) and demanded a [swift reopening of the EU's internal borders](#) and the re-establishment of free movement in a resolution on Friday. (TBD)

## Future of Europe

MEPs called for the [Conference on the Future of Europe](#) to take place as soon as possible in autumn 2020 and urged the Council to come forward with a position on the format and organisation of the conference. MEPs also emphasised that people's voices should be at the heart of the discussions.

## Help for the tourism sector

[MEPs insist on a strong and coordinated approach](#) to lift travel restrictions and to safely and gradually [re-establish transport and tourism activities](#), while ensuring the protection of public health.

## Banks

Banks will benefit from [more flexible rules on capital requirements](#) allowing them to keep lending to companies and people through the crisis as MEPs adopted changes to the legislation on Thursday.

## Sustainable investments

New rules determining which economic activity is environmentally sustainable were approved on Thursday with the aim of boosting the market for [green investments](#).

## Foreign takeovers

MEPs discussed plans to protect European companies weakened by the Covid-19 crisis from foreign takeovers with the Commission on Wednesday.

## Cross-border and seasonal workers

[Cross-border and seasonal workers](#) deserve equal treatment and protection from Covid-19, MEPs said in a resolution adopted on 19 June, calling for urgent action to safeguard health, safety and fair working conditions.

## Covid-19 and disinformation

During the Covid-19 crisis [disinformation campaigns](#) have posed new challenges to democracy and fundamental rights across the world, MEPs said in [a debate](#) on Thursday morning calling for the EU to step up and act as a global leader



in tackling the threats.

## **New parliamentary committees**

On 19 June [Parliament agreed to set up new special committees](#) on cancer, foreign interference in the EU democratic process and artificial intelligence as well as an inquiry committee on animal transport and a permanent subcommittee on tax matters under the economic and monetary affairs committee.

## **Also in plenary**

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## **[Czech Republic: EIB supports Ministry of Agriculture's plans to cope better with water management challenges](#)**



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- CZK 8 billion (around €300 million) loan to finance flood prevention, storm water retention, water supply and sanitation measures across the

country.

- Around 110 000 people to benefit from better water services.
- Sixth EIB operation bringing EIB lending to the Czech Ministry of Agriculture to €1.3 billion, with a strong climate action focus.

The European Investment Bank (EIB) is lending CZK 8 billion (around €300 million) to finance a vast set of measures put in place by the Czech Ministry of Agriculture to strengthen the country's water management services, including flood protection and storm management.

The implementation of the project will result in significant benefits for the people of the Czech Republic. It will provide protection against floods to an additional 47 000 people and improve the water supply of a total population of 24 000. Furthermore, it will increase wastewater collection and treatment for a total of 39 000 people and create an additional 2 million m<sup>3</sup> of storm water storage capacity.

**EIB Vice-President Lilyana Pavlova** commented: *"The EU climate bank is taking action to preserve natural resources and protect the environment for future generations. Thanks to these measures, the EU bank will help to improve living conditions for some 110 000 people in the Czech Republic, where approximately 25% of the population live in flood-prone zones facing disastrous floods on average every 10-15 years. This is a programme with a strong climate action focus, which will allow for the provision of better water services and help the country to meet its commitments stemming from national and EU environmental legislation."*

**Czech Minister of Agriculture Miroslav Toman** stated: *"The Ministry of Agriculture greatly appreciates the long-term cooperation with the EIB and we are very pleased to continue with it. We are facing a turbulent period of climate change, which we perceive – from the point of view of the Czech Republic – above all as a considerable decrease in water resources. As part of the measures under construction, our priority is to ensure a stable supply of drinking water for the citizens of the Czech Republic and to build new and repair existing ponds in municipalities. However, we must not forget the opposite extreme and protect the population from floods. EIB funding will help us implement many important measures to combat climate change in the coming years."*

The current operation is a continuation of very fruitful cooperation between the EIB and the Czech Ministry of Agriculture. It is the sixth loan provided by the EU bank to this ministry since 1999, for a total amount of €1.3 billion.

**Examples of concrete projects supported by the loan:**

**Water supply and sewerage**

**Project: Jelence Waterworks**

The investment involves the construction of a 1.6 km-long water line, one well drill and a reservoir of 40 m<sup>3</sup> with water treatment technology. Upon

completion, a high quality drinking water supply will be provided to local residents.

### Flood prevention

#### **Project: Třebovice, Třebovka – Česká Třebová, flow modification – construction part**

The aim of the investment is to provide flood protection along the section of the Třebovka watercourse over 12 km for the municipalities of Třebovice and Rybník and the city of Česká Třebová. This operation will increase the level of flood protection from the current two-year floods to 100-year floods.

#### **Project: Construction of a municipal pond in Chotěšice (Central Bohemia)**

Construction of a 4.7 ha water reservoir with a total volume of 66 000 m<sup>3</sup>. The project will improve the local water regime, stabilise the level of local groundwater and strengthen local eco-stabilisation functions. The water reservoir will also have flood protection impacts with a retention volume of 24 000 m<sup>3</sup>.

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## [IP Key LA addresses needs of European SMEs in Chile webinar](#)

June 22, 2020 [European Trade Mark and Design Network](#)

IP Key LA addresses needs of European SMEs in Chile webinar

The graphic features a green background with a map of South America. It includes two speaker portraits: Mariano Riccheri (IP Key LA) and Cristobal Prieto Steffens (Larrain Prieto & Cia Abogados). A date and time box indicates '25 June 2020 | 14:00 (Brussels time)'. A diagonal banner in the top right corner says 'LIVE WEBINAR'. The title 'INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY IN CHILE: Tips for Protecting and Managing your IP Rights in Unprecedented Times' is displayed in white text on dark green bars. At the bottom, logos for 'LATIN AMERICA IPR SME HELPDISK', 'IPKey', the European Union flag, and 'EUIPO' are shown.

[Intellectual Property in Chile: Tips for Protecting and Managing your IPRs in Unprecedented Times](#), organized by two EU-funded projects ([IP Key LA](#) and [LA](#)



[IPR SME Helpdesk](#)), will take place on 25 June, aiming to provide participating SMEs with essential practical information on IP protection and its added value for businesses.

In countries of the European Union and of Latin America, SMEs account for 99 % of all businesses. They are a key element of both economies. However, the 2019 Intellectual Property SME Scoreboard, confirms that one of the main barriers to SMEs registering IPR is the lack of knowledge of what IP is and how it can benefit their business is.

Therefore, IP Key LA has designed a series of country-focused webinars directed at EU SMEs. It aims to disseminate information about IP, its importance and benefits to SMEs, in order to motivate them to take advantage of what IP can do for their businesses.

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## [Article – Parliament this week: Covid-19, refugees, chemicals](#)



The environment and public health committee will discuss the EU strategy for **Covid-19 vaccines**, which aims to speed up the development of a vaccine through



a joint EU approach, with Health Commissioner Stella Kyriakides on Monday. Committee members will also debate the pandemic with Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the director-general of the **World Health Organization**, on Thursday.

On Tuesday, the employment and social affairs committee will vote on updates to **EU employment guidelines** to help mitigate the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, including recommendations to boost jobs and improve access to work.

Ahead of the European Commission issuing a proposal for a **chemicals strategy for sustainability** later this year, the environment and public health committee is expected to call for it to ensure high levels of protection for people's health and the environment in a vote on Thursday.

The budgets committee will discuss the **recovery plan** and the EU's next long-term budget on Monday. The following day Parliament President David Sassoli and the political group leaders will discuss the budget negotiations with Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

On Wednesday, the budgets committee will vote on the mobilisation of €100 million in EU aid to support Syrian **refugees** in Jordan and Lebanon and €485 million to continue urgent humanitarian help for refugees in Turkey.

Manuel Navarrete, the head of Europol's European Counter Terrorism Centre, will present the 2020 EU **Terrorism Situation** and Trend Report to the civil liberties committee on Tuesday. It includes data on terrorism in the EU and identifies trends in crime.