European Parliament
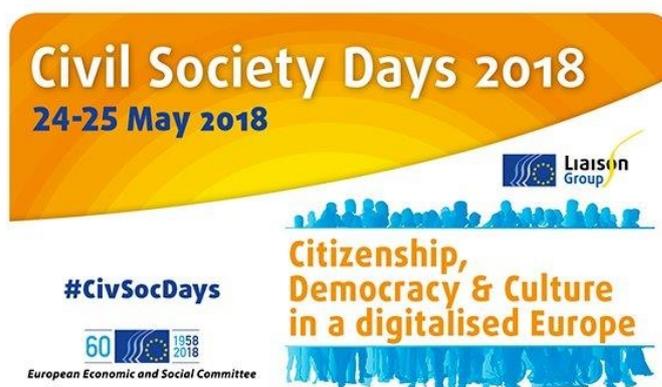EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARY
RESEARCH SERVICE

May 2018

Policies on digital economy and society have steadily gained in importance for the EU as the digital revolution has gathered pace. The aim is to create a seamless digital single market and a European gigabit society, through which all businesses and citizens can take full advantage of what digitalisation offers. The main EU action was launched with the 2015 Digital Single Market Strategy, which proposed legislative and non-legislative initiatives cutting across many policy fields. A mid-term review showed that most are either in the negotiation phase or have already been agreed. However, as technological progress continues and digitalisation becomes increasingly essential for economic growth and participation in society, the need to continue the debate on policy development has never been greater. To complement the Civil Society Days 2018 at the European Economic and Social Committee on 24-25 May 2018, this digest presents a selection of pertinent publications from the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS).

Education and Culture: A synergy for European identity in all its diversity

Cultural heritage in EU policies
Briefing by Magdalena Pasikowska-Schnass, EPRS, May 2018
2018 is devoted to the European Union's cultural heritage. This paper focuses on the evolution of the very notion of cultural heritage, its role and place in society, as well as its understanding and interpretation in the context of EU prerogatives in this matter. The European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 is a result of this evolution which allows for a broad understanding of cultural heritage in all its aspects, for the democratic sharing of responsibility for it, celebrating it and benefiting from the creation it inspires.

Adapting to digital realities. Main issues and policy responses
Briefing by Naja Bentzen, Mar Negreiro, Nikolina Šajn, Vincent Reillon and Marcin Szczepański, EPRS, April 2018
Digital technologies are transforming our lives and the world around us at an ever-increasing pace. This unprecedented change presents opportunities and risks to the European economy and citizens. Ensuring that Europe is ready, with infrastructure, closing the digital divide, boosting innovation, creating new opportunities for consumers and removing barriers for businesses are crucial in order to reap the benefits of the new digital era.

Arts, culture, and cultural awareness in education
Briefing by Magdalena Pasikowska-Schnass, EPRS, November 2017
Cultural and education policies can contribute to the development of skills that help people to cope with the complexity of contemporary multicultural societies, and to qualify for jobs in the fast-growing creative and cultural industries. Research on learning processes and the impact of art and cultural education support this position.

Access to culture in the European Union
In-depth analysis by Magdalena Pasikowska-Schnass, EPRS, July 2017
Culture, a broad term with a variety of interpretations, is a competence of Member States. However, the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union vests the EU with a supporting role towards Member States' cultural policies, protection of cultural heritage, promotion of culture and cultural cooperation. The Commission's culture work programme covers accessible and inclusive culture as an objective of EU cultural actions, in the conviction

that culture can play a role in social integration, education and well-being, in terms of consumption and also through active engagement.

Identities and Polarisation

Disinformation, 'fake news' and the EU's response
'At a glance' note by Naja Bentzen, EPRS, November 2017
The impact of the online spread of mis- and disinformation – including false news posing as factual stories – became increasingly visible in the context of the crisis in Ukraine, and gained notoriety as a global phenomenon during the 2016 presidential election campaign in the United States. Ahead of the European elections in 2019, the EU's answers to these challenges are still only tentative.

Understanding conspiracy theory
'At a glance' note by Naja Bentzen, EPRS, April 2016.
Conspiracy theory – the belief that a covert, influential agent has plotted an unexplained event – is by nature a social phenomenon. However, conspiracy theories can be used as a tool for spreading disinformation and propaganda with destabilising effects, as they have the potential to incite hatred and violence against a perceived enemy.

The Audiovisual Media Services Directive
'EU Legislation in Progress' briefing by Ivana Katsarova, EPRS, June 2017
On 25 April 2017, the European Parliament's Committee on Culture and Education voted to amend the Commission's proposal for an updated EU Audiovisual Media Services Directive. The overarching goal of the proposal, now being negotiated between Parliament and Council, is to improve the balance between competitiveness and consumer protection. It therefore aims to introduce flexibility when restrictions only applicable to TV are no longer justified, promote European films, protect minors and tackle hate speech more efficiently.

Cybersecurity and data protection: At the service of the general interest

Contracts for the supply of digital content and personal data protection
Briefing by Rafał Mańko and Shara Monteleone, EPRS, May 2017
The proposed directive on the supply of digital content is intended to regulate the main contractual rights and duties of parties to contracts for the supply of digital content and services, and create a harmonised legal framework for digital content to benefit both consumers and businesses. It covers not only contracts where digital content or services are provided in exchange for money, but also those where the consumer provides personal or other data in lieu of money to gain access to digital content or services.

Consumer Protection Cooperation
'EU Legislation in Progress' briefing by Nikolina Šajn, EPRS, October 2017
The Commission estimates that the detriment to consumers caused by non-compliance with basic EU consumer rules in certain cross-border online markets and also by inefficient cross-border enforcement amounts to €770 million per year. To remedy this, the Commission presented a legislative proposal to review the existing rules on consumer protection cooperation between enforcement authorities as part of its e-commerce package. This proposal was adopted in November 2017 and applies in full as of January 2020.

The Digital Democracy Battle: Defend your tool to improve Civic Participation

Prospects for e-democracy in Europe
Study by Scientific Foresight Unit (STOA), EPRS, February 2018
Digital tools could create stronger connections between European citizens and the EU decision-making process and, by doing so, might contribute to reducing the EU democratic deficit. This report investigates what lessons can be drawn from local, national and European experiences of the use of digital tools for the functioning of EU decision-making procedures and institutions.

The role of eGovernment in deepening the Single Market
Briefing by Marcin Szczepanski, EPRS, October 2017
eGovernment, which involves deploying technology to deliver public services, increases administrative efficiency and reduces the administrative burden on the public and businesses. The EU has been actively promoting implementation of eGovernment practices, in particular in cross-border situations.

The regions in the Digital Single Market
Briefing by Vasileios Margaras, EPRS, February 2018
The digital economy is growing at seven times the rate of the rest of the economy. The European Commission estimates that completing the digital single market could contribute €415 billion per year to Europe's economy, create 3.8 million jobs and transform public services. Local and regional authorities may also benefit from many of the opportunities which the digital era offers.

Empowerment to overcome the digital divide

Digital skills in the EU labour market
In-depth analysis by Monika Kiss, EPRS, January 2017
Digital technology is more and more interwoven into every field of public, private and working life. Consequently, digital skills have a growing importance for everybody. How can society and its citizens, in particular vulnerable groups, such as the disabled or the long-term unemployed, get onto the digital train and stay abreast of new technologies and methods? How can digital skills at the workplace be developed and used more efficiently? What has already been done at Member State and EU level and what are the challenges ahead?

The future of work in the EU
Briefing by Monika Kiss, EPRS, April 2017
Economic and technical changes are redrawing the map of the world of work: new jobs are appearing while others are becoming obsolete, and atypical work patterns are replacing full-time work and open-ended contracts. In addition, work is increasingly being carried out on online platforms connecting buyers and sellers, or by large project teams across borders and time zones. Robotics and digitalisation raise new questions, as machines are progressively replacing the human workforce for routine tasks, and as new types of professional and personal skills are required to respond to technological progress.

Artificial Intelligence as a common good

Understanding artificial intelligence
Briefing by Vincent Reillon, EPRS, January 2018
Artificial intelligence (AI) systems already permeate daily life: they drive cars, decide on mortgage applications, translate texts, recognise faces on social networks, identify spam emails, create artworks, play games, and intervene in conflict zones. The AI revolution that began in the 2000s emerged from the combination of machine learning techniques and 'big data'.

Further reading:
Understanding non-tariff barriers in the single market
Briefing by Marcin Szczepanski, EPRS, October 2017
Geo-blocking and discrimination among customers in the EU
'EU Legislation in Progress' briefing by Tambiama Madiega, EPRS, February 2018
Contracts for supply of digital content
'EU Legislation in Progress' briefing by Rafał Mańko, EPRS, February 2018
Free flow of non-personal data in the European Union
'EU Legislation in Progress' briefing by Mar Negreiro, EPRS, December 2017
Developing supercomputers in Europe
Briefing by Mar Negreiro, EPRS, October 2017

Towards a European gigabit society: Connectivity targets and 5G
Briefing by Mar Negreiro, EPRS, June 2017
Assistive technologies for people with disabilities
In-depth analysis by Philip Nicholas Boucher, Scientific Foresight Unit (STOA), EPRS, January 2018
What if computers were trillions of times faster?
'At a glance' note by Lieve Van Woensel, Scientific Foresight Unit (STOA), EPRS, January 2017
What if blockchain technology revolutionised voting?
*'At a glance' note by Philip Nicholas Boucher, Scientific Foresight Unit (STOA), EPRS, September 2016*
What if I had to put my safety in the hands of a robot?
'At a glance' note by Lieve Van Woensel, Scientific Foresight Unit (STOA), EPRS, November 2016
What if your shopping were delivered by drones?
'At a glance' note by Lieve Van Woensel, Scientific Foresight Unit (STOA), EPRS, May 2015

More in the Graphics Warehouse

Source: European Commission, 2017.
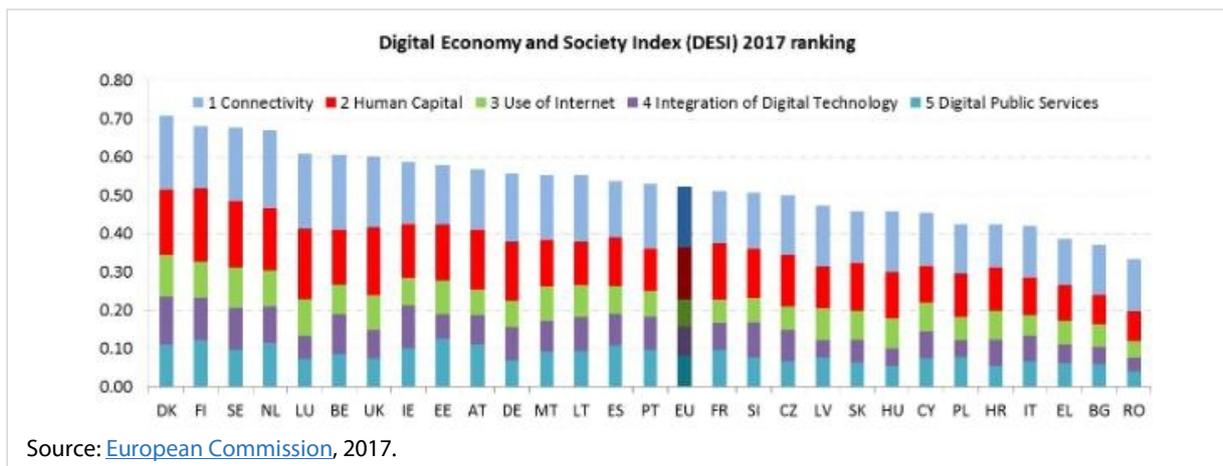
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