

Newsletter April 2024



Artificial intelligence and fundamental rights

The Committee discussed [Petition No 1256/2023](#) by Lorena Portabales Rodríguez (Spanish) on Artificial Intelligence and child pornography and [Petition No 1276/2023](#) by G. V. L.

(Spanish) on the use of Artificial Intelligence. The petitioners expressed their deep concern about the possibility of artificial intelligence (AI) to be used for generating extremely realistic fake images, especially in relation to child pornography. Therefore, they urged the European Union to set limits for the use of AI in order to prevent its misuse, which can compromise the privacy and dignity of third parties, especially minors.

The Commission stated that the use of artificial intelligence in the EU will be regulated by the AI Act, the world's first comprehensive law on AI, and asked the Committee to take into account these legislative developments. Members decided to keep the petition open and to ask the European Commission for a written reply.

Preventing femicides in the EU

The Committee discussed [Petition No 0725/2023](#) by M. V. (Spanish), on behalf of the "Plataforma Unitaria contra las Violencias de Género" association, on preventing violence against women and the concept of femicide in the EU legal framework. The petitioners stressed that violence against women is a structural and systemic issue, directly linked to patriarchy. They complained about the lack of updated data on femicides, which does not allow to have a complete picture of the situation in the EU, stressing the need to harmonise data collection and publication in the Member States.

The Commission expressed its deep concern about the increasing numbers of femicides in the EU. Moreover, it referred to the action taken, namely the Commission's proposal for a directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence, as well as the entry into force for the European Union of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) on 1 October 2023. Members decided to keep the petition open and to ask the European Commission for a written reply.





EU support for street retail

PETI Members debated Petition No 0235/2024 by Agustin Villalba Carmona (Spanish) on providing EU support for street retail. The petitioner expressed concerns about the gradual disappearance of the street commerce in Andalusia. He stressed that the street retail is crucial as it supplies small rural towns and contributes to maintain the population linked to its

territory. The petitioner called on the European Commission to support the sector of the street retail and suggested several actions.

The Commission agreed that retail is a very important ecosystem for the economy and reassured that the ongoing Revitalise Retail initiative takes into account various forms of retail. Moreover, the Commission stated that it would continue to support small retailers at EU level. The Committee decided to keep the petition open and to ask the Commission for a written reply.

Compliance with environmental EU Directives in the Venice area, Italy

PETI Members debated Petition No 0145/2024 by Lidia Fersuoch (Italian), on behalf of 'Italia Nostra Aps', on ensuring compliance by the Italian authorities with environmental EU Directives in the Venice area, Italy. The petitioner raised concerns about the planned maintenance and construction projects in the Venice Lagoon, namely in the Special Protection Area and Special Conservation Areas, established as part of Natura 2000 network under the Council Directive 92/43/EEC (Habitats Directive) and Directive 2009/147/EC on Birds.



According to the petitioner, the planned measures pose an increased risk of significant environmental damage. The petitioner called on the EU institutions to examine whether the Italian government complies with EU directives on water, habitats and birds.

The Commission stressed that any project that could have a significant impact on the Natura 2000 site shall be subject to an appropriate impact assessment. The Committee decided to keep the petition open, to ask the Commission for a written reply and to ask the competent Italian authorities for an opinion.



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