

## Safety of machinery: deal on updated rules fit for the digital era

**On Thursday, Parliament's negotiators reached a deal with their Council counterparts on the new machinery regulation.**

New provisionally agreed rules improve and adapt the existing legislative framework to the current needs of the market and safety risks stemming from emerging digital technologies. They also encourage innovation, digital transition and consumers' trust.

Parliament's big priority in these negotiations were small and medium-sized enterprises and protecting them from high administrative burden and excessive costs. MEPs were also pushing for the uptake of only digital documentation instead of paper-based solutions. Other topics of discussions were the specific categories of machinery that need a more thorough conformity assessment, and the work methodology of the European Commission in relation to updating the list of these categories. In addition to these points, the scope and definitions of the new legislation were also adapted.

### **Regulation instead of a directive**

Machinery has until now been legislated by a directive. That has given member states flexibility on how to comply with its objectives, but it has also brought on various different interpretations and legal uncertainty. Now, the directive will be replaced by a regulation that will have to be applied in all member states directly. This should improve legal clarity and decrease administrative burdens.

### **Compliance with safety rules**

For machinery to be placed on the EU market, manufacturers need to ensure that essential health and safety requirements are met and conformity checks carried out. Conformity assessment requirements for machinery products should however be proportionate to their potential risks.

Some categories of products, for example machinery with self-evolving behaviour based on machine learning (listed under Annex I, Part A), should be subject to stricter conformity assessment procedures and shall have to be carried out by a third party. For other products (listed under Annex I, Part B), the manufacturer himself can carry out the conformity

assessment.

The rules outline precise criteria to determine which machinery products should be subject to specific conformity assessments. In view of the latest technological and scientific developments, the EU Commission can adapt the classification.

### Quote

After the deal, the rapporteur [Ivan Štefanec \(EPP, SK\)](#) said: “After 18 months of work we have found an agreement on the revision of the Machinery Directive that will bring more safety for its users and predictability by harmonisation of EU markets for the machinery industry, especially SMEs.”

### Background

On April 21, as part of the Artificial Intelligence Package, the EU Commission [presented](#) its proposal on machinery products aimed at modernising the [existing machinery framework](#), which dates back to 2006. The Machinery directive is the core European legislation for the safety of, for example, lawn mowers, robots or 3D printers.

### Further information

[Procedure file](#)

[EP report](#)

[EPRS briefing on ensuring the safety of machines in the digital age](#)

[EPRS briefing on revising the Machinery Directive](#)

[Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection](#)

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