

## **The EU reorganises its digital framework: AI, cybersecurity, data and privacy under the new regulatory omnibus**

In line with the recommendations of the Draghi and Letta reports, the European Commission has stepped up its agenda to strengthen competitiveness, simplify the regulatory framework and reduce the administrative burdens faced by businesses in the internal market. To this end, since January it has been presenting a series of omnibus packages aimed at streamlining sectoral regulations and modernising their application throughout the Union.

Omnibus I, adopted on 26 February 2025, addresses the simplification of the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) and the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD), as well as certain elements of the taxonomy. Omnibus II was published on the same day, focusing on simplifying investments and aimed at promoting a new Clean Industrial Pact, while also strengthening the financial capacity of the InvestEU Fund and the European Fund for Strategic Investments.

Omnibus III introduces adjustments to the common agricultural policy with the aim of reducing the administrative burden on farmers and administrations, making more efficient use of digitalisation. Omnibus IV incorporates simplified requirements for small mid-cap companies, partially equating them with SMEs in certain areas.

Omnibus V and VI address the defence industry and the chemical sector, respectively. These initiatives, together with the seventh omnibus proposal on digitalisation, which we will discuss below, will soon be joined by additional packages on the environment, food safety, automotive, energy products, taxation and citizens' rights.

On 19 November, the Commission presented the seventh omnibus package, focusing on digitalisation and designed to reduce administrative burdens, improve regulatory consistency and promote business innovation in key digital sectors.

The package combines a digital omnibus, a Data Union Strategy and a European business portfolio. It reorganises and simplifies the EU regulatory framework in areas such as artificial intelligence, data protection, access to and re-use of public sector information, and cybersecurity.

Its aim is to harmonise scattered obligations and reduce regulatory fragmentation affecting the development of digital services and the deployment of emerging technologies across the Union. Once again, the aim is to reduce administrative burdens, improve regulatory consistency and accelerate the digital competitiveness of European businesses.

Some measures are worth highlighting. The Commission proposes linking the entry into force of obligations applicable to high-risk AI systems to the prior availability of technical standards and support tools that enable companies to comply with the requirements.

Currently, companies must report cybersecurity incidents under various regulations. To alleviate the burden of simultaneously complying with Directive 2022/2555 (NIS 2 Directive), Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR), Regulation (EU) 2022/2554 (DORA), Regulation (EU) 2024/1183 (Digital Identity Regulation) and Directive (EU) 2022/2557 (CER Directive), the Commission proposes a single point of entry for a number of cybersecurity incident reporting obligations. This interface will undergo extensive testing to ensure its reliability and effectiveness.

In the area of data protection, significant changes are being made to the General Data Protection Regulation. Among other things, the definitions of personal data and special categories of personal data are being updated; the obligations to notify security breaches to the competent authorities are being simplified and harmonised; and the processing of personal data for the development and training of artificial intelligence systems is being expressly provided for. The aim is to ensure that the application of the AI Act is operational and compatible with business innovation.

The package introduces adjustments to the GDPR aimed at harmonising legal criteria to facilitate compliance without eroding levels of protection. It also proposes to modernise the rules on cookies to reduce the proliferation of banners and allow centralised management of preferences from browsers and operating systems.

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The initiative aims to promote access to quality data through, among other measures, the consolidation of European data regulations under the Data Act, the establishment of specific exemptions from cloud portability obligations for SMEs and mid-cap companies,

new model contractual clauses, and expanded access to high-value data sets for training AI systems.

Furthermore, the new Data Union Strategy is aimed at expanding access to high-quality data through data laboratories, specialised legal assistance and a more robust approach to protecting sensitive non-personal data from unsafe international transfers.

Last but not least, it is essential to highlight the creation of the European Business Portfolio, a unique digital identity that will enable businesses and public administrations to carry out procedures, exchange verified documents, sign and seal digitally, and communicate securely throughout the European Union. The proposals will now be negotiated by the European Parliament and the Council in a legislative process that will determine their final scope.

At the same time, the Commission is launching the second phase of the simplification programme, with a public consultation on the "digital fitness check" available until March 2026. In short, the new digital package, as an exercise in streamlining European digital law with a direct impact on areas as relevant as data, AI, cybersecurity and digital transformation, represents a further step in the simplification agenda, in line with the objective of reducing administrative burdens by at least 25% (35% in the case of SMEs) by 2029, and to strengthen the competitiveness of the European business fabric over the next decade.

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