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The commission updates EU competition rules for technology licensing agreements

The European Commission has adopted revised rules governing technology licensing agreements, the latest move in its drive to promote innovation while maintaining fair competition in the digital single market.

The updated [Technology Transfer Block Exemption Regulation \(TTBER\)](#) and accompanying guidelines, which take effect before the current regime expires at the end of the month, are designed to make it simpler for companies to license patents, know-how and other intellectual property. The changes are intended to accelerate the flow of technology — including data — across the bloc, encourage investment in research and development, and strengthen Europe’s global competitiveness.

“By supporting pro-competitive licensing, we help ensure that technology, including data, can circulate more widely; encourage investment in research and innovation; and reinforce Europe’s competitiveness on a fair and open basis,” Teresa Ribera, Executive Vice-President for Clean, Just and Competitive Transition, said in a [statement](#).

The move comes a day after the [European Board for Digital Services held its 18th meeting in Brussels on 15 April](#). The board, which oversees implementation of the Digital Services Act (DSA), reaffirmed its focus on protecting minors online and streamlining enforcement against large platforms, including ongoing cases involving X, TikTok, Instagram and Facebook. While separate from the competition overhaul, the meeting underscored the Commission’s wider commitment to a “safe,

fair, and competitive online environment”.

A central theme of the Commission’s digital agenda is cutting red tape. The so-called [Digital Omnibus proposal](#), advanced last year, seeks to simplify overlapping rules across digital legislation to ease the burden on businesses, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Supporters argue it will spur innovation and cross-border growth; critics from civil society groups warn that some streamlining risks weakening user protections and privacy safeguards enshrined in earlier laws such as the DSA and GDPR.

In tandem, the Commission is pressing ahead with the [Digital Networks Act \(DNA\)](#), proposed in January, which aims to modernise Europe’s connectivity rules. The legislation would merge several existing frameworks into a single regulation to accelerate investment in 5G, fibre and other high-speed infrastructure while reducing national fragmentation that has held back pan-European services.

Officials are also advancing proposals for unified digital wallets and interoperable platforms to ease cross-border data sharing and public-service digitalisation, measures that could save billions of euros in administrative costs.

The revised licensing rules form part of a broader recalibration. With the current TTBER due to lapse on 30 April after more than a decade in force, the Commission has spent years reviewing how best to balance intellectual-property protection with the need for technology diffusion in fast-moving markets. The final text, refined after public consultation, is expected to provide clearer “safe harbours” for pro-competitive agreements while tightening scrutiny of potentially anti-competitive practices.

Criticism

In late 2025, over 120 civil society organisations, trade unions and digital rights groups warned that [the Omnibus could weaken core protections](#) under the GDPR, the ePrivacy Directive and the AI Act.

They argued that 'simplification' could narrow the definition of personal data, limit transparency obligations and reduce accountability, which would disproportionately affect user rights and privacy while primarily benefiting larger corporations. [Amnesty International](#) described this as opening the door to 'digital oppression'.

Likewise, consumer groups such as BEUC, as well as digital

rights organisations including EDRI and Epicentre.works, have criticised the DNA for potentially undermining [net neutrality](#) safeguards.

Brussels hopes the combination of lighter-touch licensing rules, streamlined regulation and upgraded infrastructure will position Europe to compete more effectively with the United States and China while safeguarding privacy, security and fundamental rights.

Check the [official announcement](#) for more, or follow the links in the text