



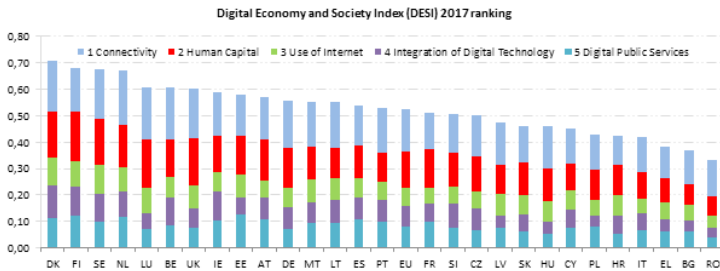
that the UK has taken on as an EU member.

A country leaving the Union “cannot enjoy similar benefits as a European Union Member State”, the draft argues, announcing the Parliament’s intention to reject “any agreement that would contradict this”. Finally, it stresses that the UK “must honour all its legal, financial and budgetary obligations, including commitments under the current multiannual financial framework, falling due up to and after the date of its withdrawal”.

Sources: Interel + Ends Europe

DIGITAL SINGLE MARKET

## 2017 Digital Economy and Society Index results are out



This month the European Commission published the results of the 2017 **Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI)**. This tool presents the performance of Member States across a number of areas, from connectivity and digital skills to the digitisation of businesses and public services.

The Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) is an online tool to measure the progress of EU Member States towards a digital economy and society. It is a composite index that summarises relevant indicators on Europe’s digital performance and tracks the evolution of EU Member States in digital competitiveness.

The DESI is composed of five principal policy areas which represent overall more than 30 indicators:

- Connectivity: how widespread, fast and affordable broadband is,
- Human Capital: the digital skills of the population and workforce,
- Use of Internet: the use of online activities from news to banking or shopping,
- Integration of Digital Technology: how businesses integrate key digital technologies, such as e-invoices, cloud services, e-commerce, etc. and
- Digital Public Services: such as eGovernment.

Please click [here](#) to consult the performances of each of the Member States. The results will be taken into account as part of the [review of the Digital Single Market strategy](#) to be unveiled in May 2017.

CYBERSECURITY

## Commission’s scientific advisers publish opinion on cybersecurity

This month the High Level Group of the Commission’s Scientific Advice Mechanism (SAM) published an **opinion** on cybersecurity with recommendations to improve online access and safety for people and businesses in the EU. The recommendations touch upon the necessity to make systems more secure, to empower users, to strengthen Europe’s cybersecurity industry and improve the coordination on cyber-incidents across Europe.

The opinion also calls for a global cybersecurity governance framework, in which the EU would play a leading role. Commission Vice-President for the Digital Single Market Andrus Ansip, who requested the opinion, said: “As cyber threats are getting increasingly sophisticated, cyber security is of major importance for the Digital Single Market. Europe’s digital economy will only bring benefits to its citizens if they can be sure of its security. For example, the Commission is organising today a **roundtable on main**

**challenges for cybersecurity in the energy system.** *The scientific opinion is another important part of our cybersecurity policy and will feed into our work on cyber security in 2017.”*

Carlos Moedas, Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, added: “Citizens need confidence in the Digital Single Market and the opportunities offered by digital technologies for better services and innovation. They need to feel reassured that their privacy is protected when they do business online, to enable growth and new business and at the same time to ensure that fundamental rights and values are protected. This independent scientific opinion provides many valuable insights to help us achieve these goals.”

The SAM was set up in October 2015 to contribute to the quality of EU legislation and complements the existing science advisory structures of the Commission.

Source: European Commission

## Strategy on cybersecurity for power networks published



The Commission’s DG Energy is preparing a strategy on cybersecurity for the whole energy sector to reinforce and to complement the implementation of Directive on security of Network and

Information Systems (NIS). This Directive was adopted by Parliament and Council in 2016 and is now in its implementation phase by Member States.

In order to assist the Commission in overseeing the implementation process, DG Energy launched the Energy Expert Cyber Security Platform (EECS), which started work in December 2015.

The platform has been given the task by DG Energy to analyse whether the energy sector is sufficiently covered by existing legislation or if there is a need for more action to achieve an effective cybersecurity.

In a **report** published by the EECS, the group advises to, at a first instance, identify operators of essential services for the energy sector at EU level. This shall be supplemented by a structured risk analysis and risk treatment plan specific for the highly interdependent European energy sector. Finally, it may be completed by the establishment of two parallel frameworks: one that aims to establish acceptable and efficient governance, at the heart of which is regional cooperation on cybersecurity topics and the other, to allow the controlled and secure disclosure of vulnerabilities and incidents affecting the energy sector in its crucial role which helps to meet the need for effective communication.

Source: European Commission

DATA PROTECTION

## Commissioner Jourova hails EU Data Protection rules in Washington

At the end of the month, Vera Jourova, Commissioner for Justice, held a speech at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington on the topics of transatlantic data flows and the protection of personal data. In her introductory remarks, the Commissioner reminded the participants that the “European Union and the United States are united in their resolve to defend our free societies against crime and terrorism. This is why our transatlantic dialogue on these issues is so important.”

One of the achievements in the EU-U.S. relations the Commissioner



is most proud of, is the Umbrella Agreement on protecting personal information exchanged as part of law enforcement cooperation: *"The Umbrella Agreement, which came into force on 1 February this year, is a big improvement compared to the past situation when our information exchanges were subject to fragmented and often weak protections which caused legal uncertainty and exposed them to legal challenges."*

She then switched to the issue of privacy and personal data protection, where she mentioned that the revised General Data Protection Regulation will come into force in 2018: *"These are modern 21st century rules, adapted to the digital age. And we will swap the 28 different set of national laws with one single set of rules for Europe's Digital Single Market. This is good for the protection of the individual and good for innovation and business across the EU, including for American companies doing business in Europe."*

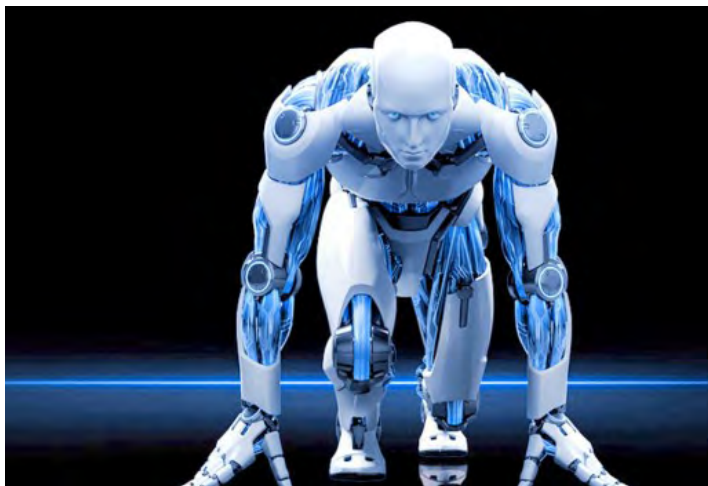
Allegedly, Commissioner Jourova would have warned the Trump administration that the European Union would withdraw from Umbrella Agreement if the Trump administration would not ensure the privacy of European data.

Source: European Commission

AI & ROBOTICS

## Taxing the robots ?

Following to the European Parliament's endorsement of its own-initiative **report** on civil law rules on robotics last month, various stakeholders started wondering to which extent robots could boost inequality. The report itself already acknowledges this aspect in that it calls *"to introduce corporate reporting requirements on the extent and proportion of the contribution of robotics and AI to the economic results of a company for the purpose of taxation and social security contributions"*, yet now prominent stakeholders, like Professor Robert Shiller (Yale University), find there is a need to reflect on taxing robotics.



Professor Shiller says: *"If these and other labor-displacing innovations succeed, surely calls to tax them will grow more frequent, owing to the human problems that arise when people lose their jobs – often jobs with which they closely identify, and for which they may have spent years preparing. [...] A tax on robots, its advocates hope, might slow down the process, at least temporarily, and provide revenues to finance adjustment, like retraining programs for displaced workers."*

He understood that critics of a robot tax have emphasized that the ambiguity of the term *"robot"* makes defining the tax base difficult. The critics also stress the new robotics' enormous, undeniable benefits to productivity growth.

But the Professor finds that one should not rule out so quickly at least modest robot taxes during the transition to a different world of work. Such a tax should first and foremost be part of a broader plan to manage the consequences of the robotics revolution.

Source: Social Europe



NEXT-GENERATION INTERNET

## Report on Next-Generation Internet available

The Commission organized an open consultation for the Next Generation Initiative (NGI) which was held between 10th November 2016 and 9th January 2017. A total of 449 people took part and provided their views both on technologies and values that are relevant for the Internet of the future.

The results of the consultation are mirrored in a **report**, which highlights that respondents found that the EU must continue to ensure that citizens maintain sovereignty over their own data. Secondly, participants also felt strongly that the Internet should ensure diversity, pluralism and a right to choose. Thirdly, the concentration of data in a few proprietary platforms is understood as a significant issue today.

From the proposed technology areas, Personal Data Spaces and Artificial Intelligence were the most important areas as recognised by researchers and the bulk of the other groups that took part in the consultation.

Source: European Commission