



Czech Telecommunication Office

January 2024

TELEGRAPHICALLY

Workshop on spoofing

On 31 January 2024 at 10 a.m., CTU will hold a workshop on the forthcoming amendment to the General Authorisation [No. VO-S/2/07.2005-10](#) laying down the conditions for the provision of public communications networks and associated facilities, as amended, as a follow-up to previous activities. The purpose of the amendment is to establish conditions for reducing the negative effects of spoofing.

Internet connection coverage

CTU has set up an e-mail box intended for mayors or other municipal representatives to allow them to submit suggestions, if any, regarding the quality and availability of high-speed internet coverage across the Czech Republic. In cooperation with the [Broadband Competence Office](#), we will review all submissions and answer questions. More information can be found on our [website](#).

DSA coordinators meeting

On 30 January, a meeting of the Chairs of the future Digital Services Coordinators under the [DSA](#) will take place in Dublin. Given that the DSA Regulation will already enter into force on 17 February 2024, the future coordinating bodies will discuss the setting up of their mutual relations, details related to information sharing and procedures to best harmonise the implementation of the DSA Regulation.

The year 2024 in CTU: digital services, legislative change, new postal licence and protection against spoofing

The approved plan of activities of CTU for 2024 prioritises in particular the preparation of CTU for the role of the National Digital Services Coordinator, block allocations of radio frequencies according to the results of the auction of frequencies for terrestrial digital radio broadcasting networks DAB or cooperation with the Ministry of Industry and Trade in the process of discussing and approving the Digital Economy Act and amendments to the Electronic Communications Act and the Postal Services Act. It will also be important to complete the process of renewing radio frequency block allocations in the 900 and 1800 MHz bands for two mobile operators. In the area of postal services, CTU will focus in particular on conducting a selection procedure for a new postal licence holder for the period from 2025. As far as consumer protection is concerned, it is essential for CTU, for example, to enshrine measures against fraudulent spoofing. In its main areas of activity, CTU will focus, among others, on the activities listed on the following two pages.

MONITORING AND ANALYSES OF ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS MARKETS

CTU will finalise the administrative proceedings concerning the imposition/withdrawal of obligations, including the application of price regulation, based on the outcome of the analyses of relevant market 1 and former relevant market 3b (Wholesale local access provided at a fixed location and Wholesale central access provided at a fixed location for mass-market products). Following the merger of CETIN and NEJ.cz approved by the Office for the Protection of Competition, CTU will also assess its impact on the level of competition in the former market 3b. As part of the 6th round of relevant market analyses, CTU will conduct and publish analyses of both so-called wholesale termination markets - i.e. the former markets No 1 (wholesale fixed termination services) and No 2 (wholesale mobile termination services).

In the area of prices and price regulation, the Office will focus on monitoring and cooperating with undertakings with significant market power in relevant markets 1 and 2 in the implementation of Commission Delegated Regulation 2021/654, by which the European Commission sets a single maximum Union-wide mobile voice termination rate and a single maximum Union-wide fixed voice termination rate. We will also assess the level of prices of wholesale offers for MVNOs under the terms of the 4G and 5G auctions, including an assessment of their real impact on VOs of the mobile services market.

SUPPORT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS NETWORKS AND SERVICES

In the area of support for the development of networks and services, the Office will continue to work closely with the Ministry of Industry and Trade in 2024 to implement subsidy calls for high-speed network coverage, including 5G networks in rural areas, and to improve the quality of 5G coverage on railway corridors. At the same time, CTU will complete and administer the project of the subsidy call "Technical Devices (Repeaters) for 5G in Railway Coaches". We will provide expert support to the Ministry of Industry and Trade in the discussion of the draft "Gigabit Infrastructure Act" in the European institutions and the subsequent preparation of implementing regulations to this regulation. We will also work with the Ministry of Industry and Trade on the issue of openRAN (e.g. in the process of drawing up the national strategy) and we will also deal with the security of electronic communications networks and services in general. CTU will continue also in 2024 to work with mobile operators and representatives of local governments in the areas in question (white areas) in order to help complete covering selected areas with a mobile signal.

REGULATION IN THE AREA OF POSTAL SERVICES

As mentioned in the introduction, in the area of regulation and control of postal services, CTU's priorities include, in particular, conducting a selection procedure for the holder of a new postal licence for the period starting in 2025. Another important task will be, together with the Ministry of Industry and Trade, to complete the process of preparation, discussion and adoption of the amendment to the Postal Services Act.

RADIO SPECTRUM MANAGEMENT

In the area of radio spectrum management, the priority for the Office is in particular the granting of radio frequency block allocations following the results of the completed tender procedure (auction) for frequencies for DAB broadcasting networks. Also in 2024, CTU will ensure the activities of the Spectrum working group. Together with representatives of the sector, CTU will mainly address the need to ensure DVB-T2 signal reception in response to complaints from the population, or, more precisely, verified insufficient coverage of some areas and the requirements of broadcasting network

operators, opening new frequency bands to support high-speed services, or updating the Radio Spectrum Management Strategy for its submission to the Government of the Czech Republic for consideration. We will decide on the renewal of radio frequency block allocations in the 900 and 1800 MHz bands, following the conclusions of the 2023 review of the rationale for the restrictions of rights in these bands. The plan is also to complete the generational upgrade of the SPECTRA software to support efficient radio spectrum management and at the same time provide more support to spectrum users in dealing with and administering their requests.

UNIVERSAL SERVICE IN THE AREA OF ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS AND POSTAL SERVICES

The provision of the universal service in electronic communications, as well as the provision of universal (postal) services, must be ensured also in 2024, both in terms of its availability and in terms of financing compensation for the net costs incurred or, more precisely, the loss. Therefore, CTU will decide on the amount of the net costs representing the unbearable burden for the year 2023 and the loss resulting from the provision of the so-called special prices for the year 2023 and will ensure their reimbursement from the state budget. In addition, we will verify the eligibility of persons using special prices on a monthly basis in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and in a system designed to prevent duplicate use thereof. We want to continue negotiations with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in order to ensure the future availability of the universal service under the social benefits scheme.

We will complete the process of notification of state aid to the European Commission in relation to the financing of net costs for the period of 2023 through 2024 and start the prenotification of state aid to the new postal licence holder from 2025.

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES

In the area of inspections of electronic communications services, CTU plans for 2024 include, for example, a nationwide inspection focused on the disclosure of the OKU code in contracts for the provision of electronic communications services, inspection of the actual communication activities performed (operation of public communications networks, provision of electronic communications services) by service providers, or inspection of compliance with Decree No. 58/2022 Coll. on conditions for number portability and the change of the Internet access service provider. In postal services, we will focus, for example, on the postal licence holder's fulfilment of obligations in official delivery (leaving notices and advices). A number of inspections will also be carried out in the area of the utilisation of radio frequencies, postal services and the security and integrity of networks and contract terms and conditions.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Consumer protection and maintaining its high level on the Czech market is one of the pillars of CTU's activities. In 2024, in addition to the regular activities, we will focus, for example, on the legislative regulation of measures to prevent fraudulent spoofing. In this matter, CTU will prepare and adopt, after discussion with the sector and the public consultation, an amendment to Measure of General Nature VO-S/2, setting out specific conditions for the international connection of incoming calls, including an assessment of the need and possibilities for a solution also for spoofing via SMS messages, using the knowledge of the approach in other countries.

LEGISLATION

In the area of legislation, we can highlight in particular the cooperation with the Ministry of Industry and Trade to ensure the legislative process for the adoption of the so-called "Technical Amendment to Electronic Communications Act II". We will also work together on the adoption of the Digital Economy Act, and on the adaptation of the legal order to the regulation on promoting fairness and transparency for business users of online intermediation services, the Digital Services Act or the European Data Governance Act, or on completing the preparation and adoption of the amendment to the Postal Services Act.

CTU will actively participate in the relevant phases of the legislative process in the preparation of the Cybersecurity Act, the adaptation of the legal order to the European regulations on the transparency and targeting of political advertising, the Data Act, the Gigabit Infrastructure Act (GIA) and others, if any.

ACTIVITIES IN THE AREA OF DIGITAL SERVICES

The activities in the area of digital services is a new field of competence of CTU and the year 2024 will be a turning point for CTU in this respect. The Office faces a number of tasks in this area. Regulation (EU) 2022/2065 on a Single Market For Digital Services and amending Directive 2000/31/EC (Digital Services Act) and Regulation (EU) 2022/868 on European data governance and amending Regulation (EU) 2018/1724 (Data Governance Act) will be implemented into the legal order. In preparation for its new position as the National Digital Services Coordinator, the Office will prepare a market study of relevant providers of online intermediation services under the DSA established in the Czech Republic and create a guide to the new obligations under the DSA from the perspective of service providers and users. We will monitor compliance with the obligations under the P2B Regulation. We will launch a register of data intermediation service providers under Article 11 of the DGA and plan to create a register of recognised data altruism organisations under Article 17 of the DGA.

DAB+ radio frequencies auction raised almost CZK 80 million

On 4 January, the electronic auction of the tender for granting of the rights to use radio frequencies in the 174 - 230 MHz band was successfully completed. The auctioned frequency blocks were allocated among 8 auction participants. According to the auction rules, successful bidders will now be asked to pay the difference between the deposit and the total price within 30 days. After payment of the surcharge, CTU Council Chairman shall decide within 30 days on the granting of block allocation of radio frequencies pursuant to Section 22 of the Electronic Communications Act. Czech Digital Group, a. s. and RTI cz s.r.o. have been granted nationwide multiplexes.

In the afternoon of the 4 January, CTU successfully completed the auction procedure for the individual auction blocks offered for the development of commercial nationwide (blocks B and C) and regional (blocks R1 – R27) networks for terrestrial digital radio broadcasting (DAB) with the following results:

Broadcast Services s.r.o.:

Auction block R2 (Prague, Central Bohemian region), R9 (Olomouc region, Moravian-Silesian region, Zlín region), R17 (South Moravian region), R22 (Pardubice region), R26 (Vysočina region);

Czech Digital Group, a.s.:

Auction block B (nationwide multiplex), R4 (Karlovy Vary, Ústí nad Labem, and Liberec region), R15 (Prague), R23 (Pilsen region);

Fiera touch s.r.o.:

Auction block R3 (Karlovy Vary, Ústí nad Labem, Liberec, Hradec Králové and Pardubice region), R13 (Prague), R20 (South Bohemian region), R25 (Vysočina region);

GG OMIKRON s.r.o.:

Auction block R16 (Prague), R18 (South Moravian region), R19 (Moravian – Silesian region);

JOE Media s.r.o.:

Auction block R12 (South Bohemian region, Sušice region), R14 (Prague), R24 (Pilsen region), R27(Karlovy Vary region);

PLAY.CZ a.s.:

Auction block R1 (Prague, Central Bohemia), R5(Karlovy Vary, Ústí nad Labem, and Liberec region), R8 (Olomouc, South Moravian and Zlín region), R10 (Moravian - Silesian and Zlín region), R11 (South Bohemian and Pilsen region), R21 (Hradec Králové region);

RTI cz s.r.o.:

Auction block C (nationwide multiplex);

TELEKO digital, a.s.:

Auction block R6 (Liberec and Hradec Králové region), R7 (Vysočina, Pardubice, South Moravian, Olomouc, Moravian - Silesian and Zlín region).

The total auction price for all Auction blocks was CZK 79.325.000.

Development criteria

The development criteria set within the tender procedure should ensure not only a successful development of DAB broadcasting but also efficient use of allocated radio frequencies. The nationwide networks shall cover 50% of the population and motorways within 18 months and 80% of the population and motorways in another 12 months. Regional broadcasting shall cover 40% of the population of the relevant region within 24 months and 70% of the population of the region in another 24 months.

Advantages of DAB+

The advantages of digital radio broadcasting include in particular the possibility of extending the offer of programmes distributed nationwide. These include the possibility of better sound quality or various additional multimedia functions and applications for which the recipient does not need the Internet. DAB should enable significantly better quality and availability of reception on the move, i.e. especially in cars. It has been mandatory for several years now for all new cars sold to include a DAB receiver.

CTU published the information about the completion of the auction and its results [here](#).

UPDATE OF THE VALUE OF THE WACC INDICATOR FOR THE PURPOSE OF DETERMINING A REASONABLE PROFIT IN THE NET COST OF PROVIDING UNIVERSAL SERVICES

CTU has updated the cost of capital (WACC) for the new postal licence for the period from 2025. WACC is one of the inputs for determining the entitlement to a reasonable profit in the calculation of net costs of the universal services provided by the postal licence holder. CTU did not receive any comments

during the [public consultation](#) on the draft updated WACC value held from 29 November 2023 to 29 December 2023. The documents submitted for public consultation remain unchanged.

RADIO SPECTRUM MANAGEMENT

DIGITAL RADIO AND TV BROADCASTING

WRC-23 confirmed international frequency protection for terrestrial broadcasting. The entire frequency band, including the 600 MHz band, remains allocated for priority TV broadcasting in Europe until at least 2031. The conditions continue to ensure that countries can use the full range of frequencies for digital terrestrial TV broadcasting in the long term. See also the issued [press release](#). For more details on the conference, see pages 8-10 of this Monitoring Report.

Checked by CTU in December...

...compliance with terms and conditions of General Authorisation No. [VO-R/12/11.2021-11](#) for the use of radio frequencies and for the operation of equipment for broadband data transmission in the bands 2.4 GHz to 71 GHz

CTU completed 6 inspections in December. Defects were identified in 4 cases, consisting mainly in harmful interference with radiocommunication service stations on a primary basis and violation of the conditions for the use of radio frequencies, which were resolved by a call to rectify the identified deficiencies and which will subsequently be addressed in administrative proceedings.

... [compliance with the conditions of an individual authorisation for the use of radio frequencies](#)

2 inspections were carried out. In one case, non-compliance with the conditions of the authorisation for the operation of a radio relay link was found and the case was dealt with by means of a call to rectify the deficiencies.

... [the use of radio frequencies without authorisation](#)

Based on radio monitoring, CTU carried out a total of 16 inspections focused on the utilisation of frequencies without authorisation (including frequencies for the utilisation of which an individual authorisation cannot be issued). In 13 cases, the utilisation of frequencies without authorisation was detected, mainly by the operation of land mobile service stations and broadband data transmission devices (RLAN). The cases were referred to administrative proceedings.

... [sources of interference with the operation of electronic communications equipment and networks, the provision of electronic communications services or the operation of radiocommunications services](#)

In December, CTU closed 8 cases of interference to LTE and 5G public mobile communication networks, 7 cases of interference to radio and satellite reception, 7 cases of interference to meteorological radar and one case of interference to the base station. The other 5 interference investigations addressed interference to short-range devices, amateur service stations, PMR radios and RLAN equipment. In cases where the interference was confirmed and the source of the interference was traced, the operators of the interference sources were ordered to eliminate them.

... [sources of interference with TV signal reception](#)

In December, CTU closed a total of 70 cases of TV signal reception interference. The investigation of complaints about poor TV signal reception revealed that in 34 cases the defect was in the viewer's

equipment (most often a technical fault of the receiving antenna or lead-in). In 14 cases the interference stopped or did not manifest itself during the investigation, and in 7 cases the complainant cancelled the interference complaint during the investigation. In 5 cases, the reception problem was caused by poor signal quality at the reception location. In 10 cases, a source of interference was detected, and in 8 cases the source of interference was identified as a base station of a mobile operator, see below.

[... pilot operation of LTE base stations in the 800 MHz band](#)

As at 31 December 2023, 455 base stations were in pilot operation, and 17,248 stations were in permanent operation. In December, an LTE base station was identified as a source of TV signal interference in 5 cases.

[... pilot operation of 5G/LTE base stations in the 700 MHz band](#)

As at 31 December 2023, 1,858 base stations were in pilot operation, and 6,736 stations were in permanent operation. In December, a 5G/LTE base station was identified as a source of TV signal interference in 3 cases. In all cases, the mobile network operators eliminated the interference at their own cost based on CTU's decision. In December, CTU sent a letter via data mailbox to 15 municipalities in whose region the pilot operation of 5G base stations was launched, [with information](#) on how to proceed in the case of TV signal reception interference.

1,053 - the number of decisions issued in December on the matter, of which 1,045 decisions concerned a dispute over monetary consideration (payment of the price for services).

1,718 – the number of administrative proceedings initiated in December concerning subscriber disputes between the person carrying out the communication activity and the subscriber. These are the disputes over payments and objections to a claim settlement about the billing of the price or the provided publicly available electronic communications service.

Don't forget to claim your unused credit when you switch operator

One of the questions addressed to CTU by users of prepaid services is the issue of refunding unused credit in the case of termination of a contract with an existing operator. The [amendment](#) to the Electronic Communications Act, which came into effect on 1 April 2020, put an end to the long-standing practice where subscribers were not legally entitled to a refund of their credit balance, which was often forfeited without compensation.

This legislation has significantly strengthened the position of consumers as it now makes it possible to refund the remaining credit when customers leave their existing operator. However, there are relevant legal rules to be observed. For example, the balance can only be refunded if the customer switches to another provider of electronic communications services. In the case of any other method of termination of the subscriber contract, the remaining credit cannot be effectively claimed back under this legislation. However, this does not preclude individual agreements with individual operators. In addition, the legislation grants this right exclusively to consumers.

Importantly, the refund of unused credit does not occur automatically as part of the process of porting your phone number to a new provider. Consumers can get it upon request, which must be made no later than 30 days from the date of termination of the commitment under the contract. The Electronic Communications Act does not provide further details on how specifically this request can be made or

what required elements it should contain. It is therefore up to the individual providers to determine their specific rules in this case.

If so agreed in the contract, the transferring providers are entitled to claim compensation for the costs they have demonstrably incurred in connection with the refund of the remaining credit. Available sources indicate that none of the above-mentioned operators currently charge the departing customers such fee.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE WORLD RADIOCOMMUNICATION CONFERENCE: The WRC-23 conference was attended by 163 countries, addressing new needs in the radio spectrum

From 20 November to 15 December 2023, the United Arab Emirates hosted the World Radiocommunication Conference WRC-23, which is revising the international Radio Regulations, in Dubai. The conference was attended by representatives of 163 member countries of the International Telecommunication Union. Four years of preparation and preparatory discussions (reported, for example, in the [Monitoring Report of April 2023](#)) have brought about the need to continue finding increasingly sophisticated methods of sharing frequencies and orbital paths in response to new needs in the radio spectrum.

Important items on the agenda included, for example, negotiations on the conditions for [IMT](#) (5G, 6G networks) in the 6 GHz band. A significant part of the agenda was also devoted to the development of communication capabilities for critical applications in aviation and transport. Among the expected outcomes of the conference was the confirmation of conditions for long-term operation of TV broadcasting in Europe in the 470-694 MHz band (the newly approved conditions based on the European proposal ensure long-term international protection for DTT as we reported in our [press release](#)). The conference also discussed a number of items in the area of space communications and scientific applications that will set the course for the future use of radio frequencies. One of these items will be exploring the conditions for direct connectivity from satellite networks.

LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

CHECKING THE CONSUMPTION AND USE OF THE SERVICES RECEIVED IN THE BILLING

On 12 December 2023, [Decree No. 356/2023 Coll.](#), on the determination of the scope of billing of the price for services provided according to the type of service, was published in [Volume 167](#) of the Collection of Laws.

This Decree will come into effect on 1 July 2024.

TEMPLATE FORM FOR NOTIFICATION OF BUSINESS ACTIVITIES IN POSTAL SERVICES

On 12 December 2023, Decree [No. 357/2023 Coll.](#) amending Decree [No. 434/2012 Coll.](#), establishing a template form for the notification of business in the postal services, was published in [Volume 167](#) of the Collection of Laws.

This Decree came into effect on 1 January 2024.

DECREE ON NUMBERING PLANS

On 20 December 2023, Decree [No. 376/2023 Coll.](#) amending Decree [No. 117/2007 Coll.](#), on the numbering plans of electronic communication networks and services, as amended, was published in [Volume 178](#) of the Collection of Laws.

This Decree came into effect on 1 January 2024.

DECREE ON CALLER LOCALISATION AND IDENTIFICATION

On 20 December 2023, Decree [No. 377/2023 Coll.](#) amending Decree [No. 267/2017 Coll.](#), on localisation and identification of caller when calling emergency line numbers, as amended by Decree [No. 22/2022 Coll.](#), was published in [Volume 178](#) of the Collection of Laws.

This Decree came into effect on 1 January 2024.

A SELECTION OF PLANNED ITEMS ON THE AGENDA OF THE CTU COUNCIL MEETING

CTU's procedure for dealing with spoofing

The CTU Council will discuss a draft measure to reduce spoofing in the amendment to General Authorisation VO/S-2, on which CTU will hold a workshop on 31 January 2024.

Information on the T-DAB tender process

The CTU Council will be informed about the details of the electronic auction within the tender for the granting of rights to use radio frequencies in the 174-230 MHz band. More information on the outcome of the auction is provided on pages 4-5 of this Monitoring Report.

Information for the CTU Council on the evaluation of complaints and enquiries from subscribers/users of electronic communications services and postal services for the 4th quarter

The CTU Council will consider a regular report on processing complaints and enquiries from subscribers/users of electronic communications services in the last quarter of 2023. As usual, a comprehensive summary of this report will be included in the next Monitoring Report in February 2024.

Conclusions of the World Radiocommunication Conference WRC-23

The CTU Council will take note of the details of the proceedings and conclusions of the World Radiocommunication Conference WRC-23. A more detailed report from the conference is presented in this Monitoring Report on page 7.

We will also inform you via press releases about the key materials discussed by the CTU Council.

Electronic data collection: Newly published forms in the ESD system in 2023

On 2 January 2024, CTU assigned 2023 data collection forms to undertakings in electronic communications within the Electronic Data Collection (EDC) system, available at <https://monitoringtrhu.ctu.cz>.

Specifically, it concerns ART forms:

ART232 – Services provided in electronic communications

BH23 – Geographical data on optic fibre connection and distribution networks and their hand-over points.

These forms are used to collect data in particular for relevant market analyses, international reporting, the State Statistical Service and geographical mapping pursuant to [Section 115a](#) of Electronic Communications Act. Supporting information for these forms is available on the [CTU website](#) (under Information on filling in ART forms).

The deadline for completing and submitting the forms is 15 March 2024.

At the same time, CTU assigned POST forms for the year 2023 to collect data on postal services:

CP23 – Collection of data from the postal licence holder and

OP23 – Collection of data from postal services operators.

The deadline for completing and submitting the forms is 31 March 2024.

In addition, CTU assigned the following forms:

BAL23 for the submission of information pursuant to Article 4(3) of Regulation (EU) 2018/644 of the European Parliament and of the Council on cross-border parcel delivery services for the year 2023.

The deadline for completing and submitting the forms is 30 June 2024.

The [templates](#) and an [overview](#) of all the above forms can also be found on the [CTU website](#), whereas their completion and submission is only possible in the electronic data collection system.

PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS AND TENDERS

DEADLINES FOR HOLDING PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

On 17 January 2024, CTU [published](#) on the Discussion Site for Public Consultation a draft version of an amendment to the Rules of the Czech Telecommunication Office for Consultation at the Discussion Site. The proposed change from the current situation, apart from technical or clarifying modifications, is mainly aimed at changing the regulation of the time limits for submitting comments so that the rules fully reflect the regulation by the Electronic Communications Act. Comments on the draft version can be submitted until 16 August 2024.

SELECTION PROCEDURE FOR THE HOLDER OF THE AUTHORISATION TO USE THE NUMBER 116 016

CTU [announced by means of publication in the Telecommunication Bulletin](#) a selection procedure for the holder of the authorisation to use the telephone number of special economic value, 116 016. The number is reserved for access to a harmonised service of social value, specifically a Helpline for Victims of Violence Against Women.

Telecommunications regulation in the EU

Official Journal of the EU

On 22 December, [Regulation \(EU\) 2023/2854 of the European Parliament and of the Council](#) of 13 December 2023, on harmonised rules on fair access to and use of data and amending [Regulation \(EU\) 2017/2394](#) and [Directive \(EU\) 2020/1828 \(Data Act\)](#). This Regulation shall enter into force on the twentieth day following that of its publication in the Official Journal of the European Union. It shall apply from 12 September 2025. The obligation resulting from Article 3(1) shall apply to connected products and the services related to them placed on the market after 12 September 2026. Chapter III shall apply in relation to obligations to make data available under Union law or national legislation adopted in accordance with Union law, which enters into force after 12 September 2025. Chapter IV shall apply to contracts concluded after 12 September 2025. Chapter IV shall apply from 12 September 2027 to contracts concluded on or before 12 September 2025 provided that they are of indefinite duration; or due to expire at least 10 years from 11 January 2024.

European Commission

The Commission welcomed the [political agreement](#) reached between the European Parliament and the Council on the Artificial Intelligence Act (AI Act), [proposed by the Commission](#) in April 2021. The political agreement is now subject to formal approval by the European Parliament and the Council and will entry into force 20 days after publication in the Official Journal. The AI Act would then become applicable two years after its entry into force, except for some specific provisions: Prohibitions will already apply after 6 months while the rules on General Purpose AI will apply after 12 months. To bridge the transitional period before the Regulation becomes generally applicable, the Commission will be launching an [AI Pact](#). National competent market surveillance authorities will supervise the implementation of the new rules at national level, while the creation of a new European AI Office within the European Commission will ensure coordination at European level.

Council of the EU

On 1 January 2024, [Belgium](#) took over the presidency in the EU Council. Belgium has set the following [priorities](#) within its [programme](#): defending rule of law, democracy, and unity; strengthening our competitiveness; pursuing a green and just transition; reinforcing our social and health agenda; protecting people and borders. Belgium took over the rotating presidency of the Council for the 13th time; continuing the work of the previous presidency of Spain before handing over to the next presidency, Hungary.