

European Parliament ratifies 'new era' tech laws

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The European Parliament on Tuesday ratified landmark laws that will more closely regulate Big Tech and curb illegal content online, as the EU seeks to bring order to the internet "Wild West".

MEPs approved the final versions of the Digital Markets Act, focused on ending monopolistic practices of tech giants, and the Digital Services Act, which toughens scrutiny and the consequences for platforms when they host banned content.

"With the legislative package, the European Parliament has ushered in a new era of tech regulation," said German MEP Andreas Schwab, a key backer of the laws.

The DMA will have major consequences for Google, Meta and Apple, and a handful of online "gate-keepers" that must now do business according to a list of do's and don'ts intended to ensure that smaller rivals can thrive.

This should do away with the complicated court battles needed to enforce the EU's competition laws that drag on for decades and fall short in challenging the giants.

The DMA passed with 588 votes in favor and only 11 against in a sign of the acute apprehension towards tech giants across the [political spectrum](#).

The DSA will target a wider range of internet actors and aims to ensure real consequences for companies that fail to control [hate speech](#), disinformation and child sexual abuse images.

The [digital world](#) "has developed a bit like a western movie, there were no real rules of the game, but now there is a new sheriff in town", said Danish MEP Christel Schaldemose.

"We have now taken back control of tech. We now have democratically determined rules for tech," she added.

The DSA also passed easily with 539 votes in favor, 54 against and 30

abstentions.

'Before and after'

Both laws now require the final approval by the EU's 27 member states, which should be a formality.

The legislation had faced lobbying from the [tech companies](#) and intense debate over the extent of freedom of speech.

Now the big question is over enforcement with worries that the European Commission, the EU's executive arm in Brussels, lacks the means to give sharp teeth to its new powers.

The EU has struggled to enforce its pioneering data protection law, known as the GDPR, with regulators facing criticism for going too slowly.

"The essential challenge now is enforcement and the actual impact of these pieces of law," said Markus J. Beyrer, head of Business Europe.

The "competitiveness of our digital players is at stake," he added.

EU internal market commissioner Thierry Breton downplayed the problem, insisting that teams dedicated to enforcement, in conjunction with national regulators, would be up to the task.

"There will be a before and an after DSA and DMA," he said.

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