EU Observatory on the Online Platform Economy

The EU Observatory on the Online Platform Economy monitors and analyses the online platform economy, supporting the Commission in policy-making.

The Observatory monitors and analyses the latest trends and data in the online platform economy. The insights produced by the observatory help the Commission in policy-making for the online platform economy.

The Observatory is made up of a group of Commission officials and a dedicated expert group of prominent independent experts. There is also a support study that helps to guide its work. The different elements of the Observatory complement each other so that it can provide the most relevant and high quality analysis to the Commission.

The Observatory has a dedicated website where professional platform users can flag issues they experience with platforms. The Observatory uses issues flagged by users to raise the Commission's awareness of the main issues businesses and professional users are facing on online platforms. This is crucial for informed and targeted policies.

The Observatory is part of the new rules for platform-to-business trading practices. It contributes to the Commission's wider strategy for a fair and safe online economy in the EU.

The support study

A dedicated study carried out by independent contractor under the supervision of the Commission supports the work of the observatory. The first final report has been published together with its annexes and 8 analytical papers.

It gathers data, analyses trends and supplies the observatory with the information it needs for its work.
Contributing to the observatory

Any business or professional platform user can help the observatory by submitting their experiences of any issues they have had with platforms on the observatory website. You can do this in any EU language.

The expert group

The expert group supports the Commission in monitoring the evolution of the online platform economy for evidence-based and problem-focused policymaking.

In this role, the expert group has several tasks:

1. advise the Commission on the main trends of the online platform economy;
2. analyse potentially harmful practices within the online platform economy, including:
   ○ issues related to algorithmic decision-making and ranking, including the question of transparency;
   ○ access to, and use of, different categories data, including personal data;
   ○ issues related to remuneration for material displayed online, in particular in relation to search results;
   ○ transparency and accountability in business-to-business commercial relations in online advertising;
   ○ differentiated treatment when business users on platforms compete with products offered by the platform;
   ○ restrictions on business users by platforms for offering different conditions when using other distribution channels;
   ○ possible impacts of these potentially harmful practices on consumers.
3. assist the Commission in the preparation of its annual work programme regarding these issues;
4. analyse the evolution of policy measures related to the online platform economy in the Member States, the Union or in third countries;
5. communicate with other relevant experts or centres of excellence upon the request and supervision of the Commission.

As this group was set up by a Commission Decision, it is part of the Register of Commission expert groups.

The final reports by the first group of experts were made public in February 2021 following stakeholder feedback and reactions on the progress reports, which were published for consultation in July 2020.

We invite stakeholders and other relevant bodies at EU or national level to engage with the experts through the Observatory website. In this website you may also find the agendas and minutes of the past meetings as well as the 2021-2022 workplan and the state of play of each of the 8 workstreams:

- Work stream 1: Online advertising
- Work stream 2: Infrastructural Power of Platforms
- Work stream 3: Innovation workshop series
- Work stream 4: Platform Governance
- Work stream 5: Algorithmic Discrimination in Platform Economy
- Work stream 6: Use of platforms technologies (big data and AI) in autocratic countries
- Work stream 7: oversight and enforcement
Members of the expert group

Following a competitive selection process for the 2nd term of the expert group, the Commission has appointed 15 high-profile experts (.pdf) as members of the expert group for the EU Observatory on the Online Platform Economy:

Chairman: Alexandre de Streel

Professor of EU law at the University of Namur, Belgium and Academic Co-Director at CERRE, Belgium

Christoph Busch

Professor of German and European Private and Business Law and Private International Law at the University of Osnabrück, Germany
Céline Castets Renard

Full Professor of Law, Civil Law Faculty, University of Ottawa, Canada

Francesco Decarolis

Professor of Economics at Bocconi University, Milan, Italy
Inge Graef
Associate Professor of Competition Law at Tilburg University, Netherlands

Henri Isaac
Associate Professor at the Université Paris-Dauphine and President of Renaissance numérique, France
Doh-Shin Jeon

Professor of Economics at Toulouse School of Economics, University of Toulouse Capitole, France

Ulrich Laitenberger

Associate Professor at Telecom Paris, Institute Polytechnique Paris, France and Research Associate at Leibniz-Centre for European Economic Research, Germany
Christiana Markou
Assistant Professor at the European University, Cyprus

Pilar Montero
Professor at the University of Alicante, Spain
Aurélie Pols

Board Member European Center for Privacy and Cybersecurity (ECPC) for Maastricht University, Netherlands

Jens Prüfer

Associate Professor of Economics, Tilburg University, Netherlands
Teresa Rodríguez de la Heras Ballell
Associate Professor of Commercial Law at University Carlos III of Madrid, Spain

Cristina Trenta
Associate Professor of Law, Örebro University, Sweden
Martin Žagar
Assistant Professor at the RIT Croatia, Croatia

Latest News

PRESS RELEASE | 05 July 2022
Commission welcomes European Parliament´s adoption of Digital Services Package

The Digital Services Package sets out a first comprehensive rulebook for the online platforms that we all depend on in our daily lives.

PRESS RELEASE | 16 May 2022
EU-US Trade and Technology Council: strengthening our renewed partnership in turbulent times

The EU and the US have reaffirmed their close cooperation to address global trade and technology challenges in line with their shared commitment to democracy, freedom and human rights.

PRESS RELEASE | 23 April 2022
Digital Services Act: Commission welcomes political agreement on rules ensuring a safe and accountable online environment
The Commission welcomes the swift political agreement reached today between the European Parliament and EU Member States on the proposal on the Digital Services Act (DSA), proposed by the Commission in December 2020.

PRESS RELEASE | 25 March 2022
Digital Markets Act: Commission welcomes political agreement on rules to ensure fair and open digital markets

The Commission welcomes the swift political agreement reached yesterday between the European Parliament and EU Member States on the Digital Markets Act (DMA).

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Big Picture

Online Platforms

The European Commission aims to foster an environment where online platforms thrive, treat users fairly and take action to limit the spread of illegal content.

See Also

Geoblocking
The Commission put an end to unjustified geo-blocking rules, which undermine online shopping and cross-border sales in the EU.

Illegal content on online platforms

The European Commission adopted a recommendation on measures to effectively tackle illegal content online.

Source URL: https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/policies/eu-observatory-online-platform-economy