

MORNING TECH

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PRESENTED BY



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SNEAK PEEK

- **Poland's new digital chief Dariusz Standerski** is on a mission to mend links with Brussels.
- **Tensions are rising around** the Gigabit Infrastructure Act.
- **Germany falls in line** on the Artificial Intelligence Act vote after a suspenseful week.

Good morning and welcome to Morning Tech. Still Gian here. **Send gossip and tips to** [Gian](#), [Pieter](#), [Mathieu](#), [Clothilde](#), [Antoaneta](#), [Océane](#) and [Mark](#).

DRIVING THE DAY

WARSAW TO BRUSSELS: LET'S BE FRIENDS AGAIN: After eight years of clashes between Brussels and the former right-wing Polish government, Poland's new leaders want to reconnect with Europe.

Dariusz Standerski, Poland's deputy minister for digital affairs, is responsible for international affairs and strategy, innovation and research and digital laws. He made his first visit to Brussels last week to kick off a charm campaign.

Just a month after the new coalition government, led by former European Council President Donald Tusk, got to work, Standerski focused on a more technical visit, opening a privacy event at the Polish permanent representation and meeting with DG CONNECT Director General Roberto Viola and the head of the cabinet for Internal Market Commissioner Thierry Breton, Valère Moutarlier. "This is the first of many visits we will have," the 30-year-old junior minister told Morning Tech. "The heartbeat of Europe is here in Brussels."

But first, who is Standerski? The former economics university lecturer ran and failed three times in 2019 and 2023 to become either an S&D lawmaker or a center-left lawmaker at the Sejm, Poland's parliament. The former director of legislation for The Left, Standerski was appointed in December to work under Krzysztof Gawkowski, Polish deputy prime minister and digital affairs minister, who hails from the same party and with whom he co-wrote its digital

manifesto.

First things first: Standerski came to reassure Brussels that his government would speed up implementing much-delayed European laws like the European Electronic Communications Code into its national books. The European Commission has also taken Warsaw to the Court of Justice of the EU for being late with the copyright directive. Standerski said Warsaw would move forward with the [Digital Services Act](#) (DSA).

Hopefully, Standerski said, future visits “will be not about delayed implementation, but will be about our proposals in terms of, for example, the future Telecom Act, or provisions for [the] Cybersecurity Act, or our proposals for a European wallet.” Poland will take over the rotating presidency of the Council of the EU in January 2025.

Poland wants to shape Brussels’ digital directions, particularly because the new government sees tech as one of its priorities. Defense and digital are crucial “not only strategically in terms of AI developments or quantum technology but also because we are the country near frontline and Ukraine,” Standerski said.

Still, Standerski said that beyond implementing delayed legislation, there was a lot to do domestically in Poland, including plans to ramp up investment for semiconductor factories and artificial intelligence. Poland [ranked](#) among the least digitally advanced EU countries last year in terms of

human capital, connectivity, digital public services, and the use of tech like AI, with only Greece, Bulgaria and Romania behind.



AGENDA

COMMISSION: Executive Vice President and digital czar Margrethe Vestager is in Washington, D.C., where she partakes in an event on the EU's Economic Security Package alongside Commission trade chief Valdis Dombrovskis.

The duo also meet U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, while Vestager is also slated to participate in a "stakeholder event" on the Transatlantic Green Marketplace.

Jobs Commissioner Nicolas Schmit is in the European Parliament for a conference on the right to disconnect, hosted by the Socialists and Democrats group.

Also in Parliament Commission Vice President Věra Jourová, who speaks to the Conference of Presidents about disinformation ahead of the European election this year.

PARLIAMENT: The civil liberties committee [will vote](#) on an extension of the e-privacy derogation.

SOCIAL MEDIA NIGHTMARE DAY: Brace yourself for a tough day of grilling for executives of major online platforms.

— In the United States, Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg, TikTok's Shou Zi Chew, X's Linda Yaccarino, Snapchat's Evan Spiegel and Discord's Jason Citron will testify in Congress on the "online child sexual exploitation crisis" at 4 p.m. Brussels time [here](#).

— In Europe, the center-right European People's Party group is [holding an event](#) in the European Parliament on protecting children from violence, abuse and racism on social media from 2-4 p.m. with executives from TikTok, Meta and Snapchat.

CONFERENCES: Cristina Caffarra's [antitrust conference](#) kicks off at 8:20 a.m. with DG COMP's Olivier Guersent. Attending U.S. officials include Trade Representative Katherine Tai, the Justice Department's Jonathan Kanter and Federal Trade Commission Chair Lina Khan.

The European 5G Conference enters its second and final day.

****A message from the Information Technology Industry Council (ITI):** Innovation. Open markets. Europe's tech

landscape can seize an opportunity if policymakers use the next mandate to make the EU attractive for investment. The Information Technology Industry Council's Vision 2030 provides a must-read plan to advance EU competitiveness through smart innovation policy. Download the ITI report [here](#).**

TELECOMS

THIS WEEK'S (OTHER) TALK OF THE TOWN: The tension is rising over telecoms these days, with a political agreement on a new law set to land Monday and the blueprint for the Digital Networks Act around the corner.

Fair warning: “There will not be a [[Gigabit Infrastructure Act](#)] without intra-EU calls,” the Parliament's lead negotiator Alin Mituța said Tuesday at the 5G Conference, a two-day event being held in Brussels to take stock of mobile networks' rollout.

Showbiz, baby: The lawmakers' push to end surcharges for calls from one EU country to another has emerged as a very controversial initiative — exasperating operators that see one of their revenue streams flying out of the window — and powerful leverage when bargaining with member countries, which [could settle](#) for a gradual reduction in exchange for more flexibility on other key provisions.

Mituța told Morning Tech he was currently touring EU ambassadors to garner their support.

That bodes well: Despite some critical articles like the “tacit approval” mechanism being watered down, and the Parliament’s unforeseen additions, it’s still a deal “worth having,” Deputy Director of DG CONNECT Renate Nikolay said, adding that — if anything — it “shows that all institutions, all stakeholders really have to warm up to addressing the connectivity regulatory framework.”

Nah-nah: Operators see the tide turning in the ongoing negotiations. The new law, whose original purpose was to make their lives easier, may now not live up to their expectations. “Do we actually need a regulation which, in the worst-case scenario, will penalize the telecom sector, and actually will not help us move forward?” wondered Maarit Palovirta from the telecom association ETNO.

Going big on spectrum: The European Commission has repeatedly said that spectrum would be a game-changer in its efforts to meet the bloc’s digital targets by 2030 and head toward a more unified single market for telecoms — to the delight of operators that have been calling for more harmonization and predictability for the attribution of this (very costly) finite resource. ETNO’s annual report [estimated](#) that European teleco firms have spent €26 billion in spectrum auctions for 5G and are expected to add an extra €2.7 billion.

According to a document previously [obtained](#) by POLITICO, the upcoming white paper on digital networks “will address the risks to EU sovereignty in spectrum management in terms of governance.” Morning Tech quizzed DG CONNECT’s

Nikolay over how it would actually translate. “I can’t give you the details because [the white paper] is still in the machine room but ... it’s about predictability for the operators and giving a more stable regulatory framework,” she said.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

AI DRAMA IS (PROBABLY) OVER: With Germany’s digital minister Volker Wissing finally throwing in the towel and [announcing](#) he would green-light the [Artificial Intelligence Act](#) — up for an EU Council vote on Friday — the chances of a last-minute kibosh on the landmark AI rulebook have dwindled significantly. Italy has also decided to back the AI Act after all, according to one EU diplomat familiar with the decision. It was a nice diversion, but — barring gobsmacking reversals — the saga is slowly trudging toward its closure. Intrigue and chicanery fans will join us in weeping.

TAKE AI-ACTION: Web browser Mozilla and nine campaign groups [called on](#) Commission competition enforcers to take a tough line on Microsoft’s investments in OpenAI, citing a laundry list of problems for the tech sector. Competition chief Margrethe Vestager earlier this month said she was [looking into](#) whether merger rules could be used to examine the partnership.

Influence: The group’s seven-page letter to DG COMP alleges that “Microsoft influence over OpenAI goes far beyond its reported \$13 billion financial investment” and that the recent firing and rehiring of OpenAI boss Sam Altman shows “the strength of the tech giant’s influence over its smaller

partner.”

“Only by acting early and aggressively against anti-competitive behavior in AI can regulators prevent this oligopolistic control from being extended further,” they said. The letter tells DG COMP to look for “tacit or explicit agreement with OpenAI” that would stop it from competing with Microsoft and how much insight Microsoft has into the models OpenAI develops.

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FINTECH

FRAUD RULES TIGHTEN AROUND BIG TECH: It looks like the European Parliament will move ahead with measures that'd require telecom giants and Big Tech to refund anyone who's tricked into a payment scam, according to draft amendments obtained by POLITICO.

Lawmakers handling updates to existing EU rules for payment services are meeting this afternoon for (what's expected to be) the last political gathering on the initiative before the amendments will go for a committee vote. The draft amendments for today's discussion can be found [here](#),

while the longer technical compromises in the bill are [here](#).

So what? Refunds for payment scams have long come from banks. But Poland's socialist lawmaker Marek Belka and his team, who are leading the [Payment Services Regulation](#) (PSR), are determined to make these rules fit for the online world.

That means companies like Vodafone, Orange, Meta and TikTok, would be held liable for people who suffer imposter scams through text messages, calls or social media posts. But the refund rules would also expand to fake ads on online platforms, which would also capture online shopping giant Amazon and search engine Google.

The bottom line: These rules are all about protecting people from scams. But the real story here is how Big Tech is becoming more and more ingrained into our financial system.

PLATFORM WORK

GIG WORK NO GO: Representatives from the European Parliament and Council did not reach a deal on the [Platform Work Directive](#) during negotiations on Tuesday, according to a Belgian Council presidency official.

MOVERS AND SHAKERS

MORE TIKTOK HIRING: Video-sharing platform TikTok is [looking for](#) a senior policy communications lead for its