

# MORNING TECH



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with **Pieter Haeck, Clothilde Goujard, Laura Kayali and Samuel Stolton**

## SNEAK PEEK

- Dutch Prime Minister **Mark Rutte** is visiting the White House, and he will likely talk about **chips**.
- An Irish NGO asks whether the European Parliament is using **face-recognition cameras**.
- The European Commission is asking for feedback on **illegal audiovisual streaming**.

**Welcome to Morning Tech.** This is Gian Volpicelli, your trusty MC. Send gossip and tips to: [Gian](#), [Clothilde](#), [Pieter](#), [Vincent](#), [Antoaneta](#), [Louis](#), [Laura](#) and [Mark](#).

## DRIVING THE DAY

**CHIPS ON THE SIDE:** Officially, the visit of Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte to the [White House today](#) is all about Ukraine and how to coordinate military support for the country (with Rutte also having a call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy

ahead), but there's a high likelihood that Rutte and U.S. President Joe Biden will have a word about ongoing talks between the U.S. and the Netherlands on export restrictions on sending advanced chip technology to China.

**A reminder:** Dutch firm ASML is critical for chips production; a ban on exports to China could kneecap the country when it comes to progress on artificial intelligence and weapons, among other sectors. As the Dutch find themselves [caught between the U.S. and China on chips](#), they also have to balance a commitment to free trade — and their own economic growth — with national security interests.

**A week of frantic talks and visits:** Dutch executives involved in the talks — like foreign trade minister Liesje Schreinemacher — are taking to the road, with chips as a topic never far away. Schreinemacher visited ASML on Monday and will attend a panel about semiconductors at the World Economic Forum on Thursday.

**But this is not only about us:** The Dutch have pulled other EU countries — including France and Germany — into the conversation, Schreinemacher [said](#) in a TV show on Sunday.

**Speaking of chips:** Call next Tuesday “Chips Day,” when the industry committee is set to vote on its position on both the Chips Act and the Chips Joint Undertaking (the vehicle managing the EU's chips budget), according to an [updated](#) timeline.

If approved, both files are on course for a February 13 plenary vote — after which negotiations with Council can kick off. EU member countries already adopted their position in [early December](#).

## AGENDA

**PARLIAMENT:** The Swedish Council presidency [presents its program](#) before MEPs from 9-11:50 a.m.

But it's also a full day on the digital front. From midday on, the plenary will vote on an EU-New Zealand agreement on the [exchange of personal data for policing purposes](#), and on an additional protocol to the Council of Europe's [Convention on Cybercrime](#), aimed at bolstering international cooperation.

In the afternoon, nerds should peel their eyes for [a debate on video games and consumer protection](#).

**ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ACT:** Political assistants of MEPs working on the AI Act will no longer meet today, but rather Wednesday. *And* Wednesday's previously scheduled chinwag of key MEPs working on the file is canceled. Sigh.

**COMMISSION:** Over at the World Economic Forum's Davos jamboree, Commission President Ursula von der Leyen will give a "special address", while Commission's values and transparency chief Věra Jourová speaks on disinformation and digital safety.

Also in Davos is jobs Commissioner Nicolas Schmit, who will meet executives from Google and LinkedIn. He will also join a panel discussion on skills and green transition, and a roundtable on reskilling.

**DATA PROTECTION:** The European Data Protection Board holds a (remote) meeting featuring Justice Commissioner Didier Reynders. [On the agenda](#) is a draft adequacy decision on data transfers between the EU and the U.S. Updates on cloud and

from the delightfully named “cookie banner task force” are also on the calendar.

**UK PARLIAMENT:** The U.K. House of Commons’ digital committee will hear from Amazon, Google and the British Information Commissioner’s Office about the promise and peril of connected technology (a more annoying way of calling the Internet of Things). The hearing starts at 3:30 p.m. Brussels time and will be livestreamed [here](#).

**PWD CHALLENGE DEADLINE DAY:** Lawmakers have until midnight tonight to execute their [plans](#) to challenge the Parliament’s stance on the Platform Work Directive. If they do so, a plenary vote is set for Thursday.

## PRIVACY

**FACING THE QUESTION:** Is the European Parliament using facial-recognition cameras? And if so, who made them? That is what Irish human rights nonprofit the Irish Council for Civil Liberties asked in [a letter to Parliament President Roberta Metsola](#). ICCL researcher Kris Shrishak has unearthed [EU documents](#) showing that back in 2016, Parliament buildings were fitted with cameras that, as per a 2015 tender’s specs, “shall incorporate a system for recording video sequences triggered by ... detection/recognition of humans/faces.” Shrishak thinks that those cameras might still be there.

**There’s more:** Besides asking if and how long facial recognition has been used in Parliament, [Shrishak underlines](#) how the tender requests that the cameras run software by a company that counts Chinese camera maker Hikvision among its partners. Back in 2021, the use of Hikvision thermal cameras in Parliament

caused an uproar among MEPs, who bridled at the company's role in Beijing's alleged human rights violations. We don't know what kind of cameras the contractors that won the 2015 tender installed in Parliament: That information has been redacted.

**The policy angle:** Facial recognition is one of the hot-button topics in the ongoing discussion of the Artificial Intelligence Act. "Considering MEPs' views on facial-recognition technology in the EU's AI Act discussions, the purchase of these cameras raise[s] a number of questions that must be answered," Shrishak told Morning Tech.

**Rebuttal:** "In the past years (due for instance to the attacks in Brussels), the European Parliament reinforced its security and is in constant contact with Belgian authorities. Measures include security improvements to the entrances, its security perimeter or accreditation policy. It doesn't entail facial recognition," a Parliament spokesperson said. "We cannot present all detailed information as security is by essence not a topic we comment [on]. Regarding the mention of cameras, the European Parliament does not use any facial recognition technology through its CCTV system."

## PLATFORMS

**PIRACY GRUMBLING EXPECTED:** The European Commission is looking to gather feedback until February 10 on a nonbinding [recommendation](#) to fight the illegal streaming of live events, planned for a release in the third quarter of 2023 (so between March and the end of June). Broadcasters and sports industries had [lobbied](#) massively for a hard law to crack down on pirates cutting into their revenues.

**IRELAND PREPPING FOR THE DIGITAL SERVICES ACT:** Ireland’s Media Commission is [looking](#) for its chief enforcer for the Digital Services Act. While the European Commission will hold most of the power to police Big Tech, Ireland — where most of the U.S.’s major tech companies are legally based in the EU — will have investigatory powers and give NGOs and law enforcement their special status to report illegal content to platforms.

### **FRANCE’S NATIONAL MUSIC CENTER PITCHES CHARTER**

**AGAINST FAKE STREAMS:** In 2021, one to three percent of music streams were fake, according to a long-awaited [study by the National Music Center](#) based on data shared by Deezer, Spotify, Qobuz and powerhouse labels including Universal, Sony and Warner. (Amazon, Apple and Google’s YouTube refused to provide data, according to the study.) The center was tasked by the culture ministry to look into “fraudulent streams” on music platforms and said it would conduct another study next year.

**Why it’s a problem:** Money is paid to artists according to the number of streams, and fraud can lead to undue payments. The National Music Center suggests “an interprofessional charter to prevent and fight against the manipulation of online streams” that would allow audits shepherded by public authorities. The SNEP, which represents the largest labels, [welcomed the study](#).

## DATA ACT

**FUNCTIONAL EQUIVALENCE REMAINS WORRYING POINT:** A group of 13 tech and regular business lobby groups — Brussels regulars like CCIA and Allied For Startups among them — has put out a [new position paper](#) on the EU’s Data Act today — zoning in on a concept that has sparked concern before: the “functional equivalence” customers should enjoy when they switch from

one cloud provider to another.

**What they said:** “Confusing operationally, legally and technically,” is the harsh judgment call, adding that it’s “impossible” to comply without accessing a competitor’s environment.

**Well-timed:** It’s no surprise that the paper is coming out today, given talks in the telecoms working party this afternoon and given that the parliamentary committee in charge of the cloud chapter (the internal market committee) is nearing the finish line, with a vote scheduled for next Tuesday. The lead MEP in that committee, Adam Bielan, killed the “functional equivalence” requirement in his [draft report](#), but recently it made a [reappearance](#).

## DIGITAL MARKETS ACT

**NEW DMA DIRECTORATE:** Alberto Bacchiega took his seat at the top of DG COMP’s Digital Markets Act enforcement team on Monday, as the European Commission [unveiled a new directorate](#) tasked with ensuring compliance with the EU’s landmark digital rules.

## MOVERS AND SHAKERS

**TECH LOBBYING:** After a decade as a consultant for Dentons Global Advisors, Elias Papadopoulos has become a director for policy at Dot Europe, a tech lobby representing companies like Apple, Microsoft, Meta and Mozilla. He will be looking at data and cybersecurity, as well as tech policy developments and Dot Europe’s strategy.