

# ***CEPLIS TELEGRAM***



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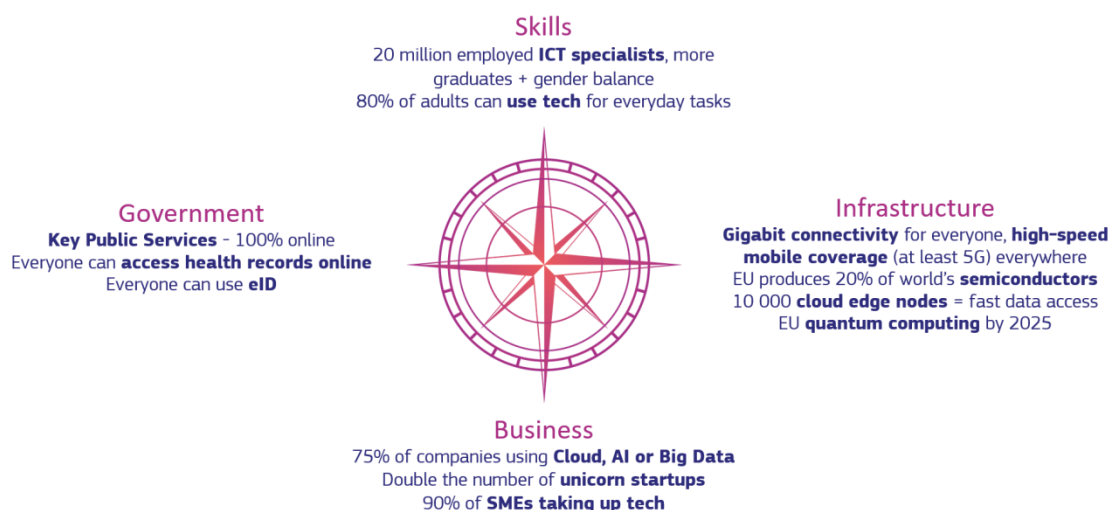
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## European Union's Digital Decade Policy Programme 2030

The 9<sup>th</sup> of January, the **Digital Decade Policy Programme 2030 entered into force** following the agreement between the Member States, the European Parliament, and the European Commission on the elaboration of concrete objectives and targets in the **four key areas of digital skills, infrastructure, digitalisation of businesses, and online public services.**

Leading up to 2030, EU Member States, in collaboration with the Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the Commission, shall shape their digital policies to **achieve targets in 4 areas in order to:**

- Improve citizens' basic and advanced digital skills;
- Improve the take-up of new technologies, like Artificial Intelligence, data and cloud, in the EU businesses, including in small businesses;
- Further advance the EU's connectivity, computing and data infrastructure; and
- Make public services and administration available online.



The objectives of the Programme shall be to ensure safe and secure digital technology, a competitive online environment for SMEs, safe cybersecurity practices, fair access to digital opportunities for all, as well as developing sustainable energy and resource-efficient innovations. Accordingly, the European Commission shall produce an annual progress report that will assess the objectives and targets of the Digital Decade Policy Programme.

A new high-level expert group, the **Digital Decade Board**, will reinforce the cooperation between the Commission and the Member States on digital transformation issues, while a new Forum will also be created in order to bring on board various stakeholders and discuss their views.

In the coming months, the Commission, together with Member States, will develop key performance indicators that will be used to monitor progress towards individual targets, within the framework of the annual Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI). In turn, EU Member States will have to prepare

**their national strategic roadmaps within 9 months, describing the policies, measures and actions that they plan to make, at national level, to reach the Programme's objectives and targets.**

In this context the **Commissioner for Internal Market, Thierry Breton** underlined the importance of **digitalisation**: *“It is important for Europe to **embrace the Digital Decade in order to ensure our digital transformation is successful**. To achieve this, **we must prioritise the development of highly-skilled engineers, increased connectivity across the continent, and improved infrastructure for our SMEs**. By focusing on key technologies such as 5G, cloud computing, fiber optic networks, quantum computing, and microelectronics, we will work with Member States to achieve our goal of resilience and autonomy by 2030.”*

You may find more information about this Programme and the next steps [here](#).

## UNAPL 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Congress

The 2<sup>nd</sup> of December, our French colleagues of the National Union of the Liberal Professions (UNAPL) held their 30<sup>th</sup> annual Congress. In this context, the event was intended to be, and was, an opportunity for a truly constructive exchange with the future young liberal professionals, who are currently still students and are represented by FAGE (Federation of General Student Associations).

The objective was to better understand the expectations of the younger generations in order to build together the future of the liberal sector, to continue its modernisation and to reinforce its attractiveness, including towards women.

The issues of training and mutual learning were at the heart of the debate.

The President and Board of UNAPL were pleased to hear that the majority of student speakers were positive about choosing liberal status, even though there is, unsurprisingly, a real demand to be better trained in management issues within companies during their studies.



Mr. Michel Picon, President of UNAPL



The training for the profession of osteopath already includes such a concern.

While some professions implement a form of companionship via internships, intergenerational training would undoubtedly benefit from improvement. Moreover, it cannot be conceived as a one-way street, as the challenges of the digitalisation of the sector prove. In the face of new societal and environmental challenges, intergenerational collaboration appears to be a source of efficiency.

For further information please contact our Secretariat

## Digitalization can help SMEs fight rate hikes

An article published on January 3 in Spain's leading business newspaper *Cinco Días* describes how the European Central Bank's recent decisions to raise interest rates will affect SMEs and how they can protect themselves by using modern technology.

Indeed, the financial situation of many SMEs has improved during 2022, but the possibility of a slowdown must be kept in mind for 2023.

Last December was marked by the meeting of the European Central Bank (ECB). The result: a **rate hike**. The ECB has decided to slow down, but not to stop, the pace of rate hikes in view of the first indicators that seem to show a slight slowdown in high inflation rates. This moderate rise will mean that banks will have to pay more for the ECB to lend them money and, therefore, it will also increase the cost of their loans to consumers and companies. **The greatest consequences of this rise will be felt by SMEs**, the small and medium-sized enterprises that are the engine of many Member States' economies.

Only in 2022, interest rates have risen by 2.5% in the Eurozone, which has led to a clear tightening up of conditions of companies, worsening their financial situation and reducing the ease of access to credit due to the perception of risk of the banks, which are obliged to refuse more financing or to demand greater guarantees.

Meanwhile, **SMEs will require more and more support and financing**. High inflation has caused overall prices to rise, and business costs are no exception. Raw materials have become more expensive, supplies are soaring because of energy prices, and labor costs continue to rise. Some companies will be able to maintain their profit margins if they are able to reflect these increases in the final product or service or if they can be more efficient. Others, however, will see an irreversible worsening of their business if they are unable to succeed in these actions.

Given these circumstances, **companies can protect themselves through digitalization**. Fintech technologies enable financial professionals to have greater visibility and real-time information to make the right decisions regarding cash management and the administration of payments and collections. This type of technology facilitates monitoring and anticipatory decision making or alternative searching.

For further information, you can visit the original article [here](#).

## European Parliament: calendar for 2023

As adopted on the 24<sup>th</sup> of March 2022, the European Parliament is **scheduled to hold 17 plenary sessions, of which 12 are four-day sessions in Strasbourg and five are two-day sessions in Brussels.**



The dates are as follows:

### In January

- From the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> (**Strasbourg**) , and the 26<sup>th</sup> (**Brussels**)

### In February

- The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> (**Brussels**), and from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> (**Strasbourg**)

### In March

- From the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> (**Strasbourg**) , and from the 29<sup>th</sup> to the 30<sup>th</sup> (**Brussels**)

### In April

- From the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> (**Strasbourg**)

### In May

- From the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup> (**Strasbourg**) , and from the 31<sup>st</sup> to the 1<sup>st</sup> of June (**Brussels**)

In June

- The 1<sup>st</sup> (**Brussels**), and from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> (**Strasbourg**)

In July

- From the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> (**Strasbourg**)

In September

- From the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> (**Strasbourg**)

In October

- From the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup> (**Strasbourg**) , and from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> (**Strasbourg**)

In November

- The 8<sup>th</sup> and the 9<sup>th</sup> (**Brussels**), and from the 20<sup>th</sup> to the 23<sup>rd</sup> (**Strasbourg**)

In December

- From the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> (**Strasbourg**)

You may find more information about the dates of the plenary sessions, the meetings of the committees and groups [here](#).