The European Commission has adopted the first designation decisions under the Digital Services Act, designating 17 Very Large Online Platforms (VLOPs) and 2 Very Large Search Engines (VLOSEs). Designated companies now have four months to comply with their obligations under the act. Details and full list here.

The UK government has published a policy paper on spectrum, recognising its ‘greater scarcity in some frequency bands’ and setting its efficient use as a priority ‘to ensure that spectrum is not a limiting factor on the UK’s economic and societal potential’. The paper promises a focus on innovation, management and effective cross-government working. A new framework for public sector spectrum use is also planned.

The European Parliament is pushing for tough new measures as part of the EU's Artificial Intelligence Act. Proposals include making developers declare if copyrighted material has been used to train their models, allowing content creators to charge them, and for misuse of AI programs to lie with developers rather than the businesses using them. Facial recognition would also be banned in all public spaces. The measures would rank as the toughest regulations in the world, and reflect growing concerns over the potential for abuse of the technology. It’s not clear to what extent the proposals will be accepted by the European Commission. Meanwhile, the European Data Protection Board has set up a task force on ChatGPT following the ‘curbing’ of the chatbot in Italy and wider privacy concerns in European states.

Ireland’s Data Protection Commission is expected to make an order blocking Facebook’s transatlantic data flows by mid-May. The European Data Protection Board came to a binding decision but, as the country in which Facebook parent company Meta has its headquarters, it is up to the Irish regulator to adopt it. The concern is that US intelligence agencies may be able to access the data. A new EU-US data protection framework designed to offer protections equal to those in the EU is due to be in place later this year. Meta has warned that a ban could force it to suspend Facebook services in Europe.

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German artist Boris Eldagsen has rejected a prize at the Sony World Photography awards after revealing that his winning entry, ‘Pseudomnesia: The Electrician’, was generated by AI. Eldagsen said that his intention was to open up a **debate around AI-generated images**, which had left many photographers feeling ‘threatened and afraid that they are going to lose their jobs’. He described his actions as similar to a hacker who ‘hacks a system not to exploit it, but to see if there are weaknesses’.

The latest **submarine cable map** has been published by telegeography. It shows a surge in projects in Africa and the Middle East. Marseille remains the dominant landing site in the Mediterranean, while there are new landings in Barcelona, Genoa and Crete. Viewable [here](#).

A number of platforms have asked the UK government to **urgently rethink** its **online safety bill**. The bill requires the monitoring of user content to prevent the publication of ‘harmful content’, but the platforms argue that this will require the scanning of content prior to encryption, raising security concerns. The open letter, signed by executives from platforms including Signal, WhatsApp, Viber and Wire, states that ‘as currently drafted, the Bill could break end-to-end encryption, opening the door to routine, general and indiscriminate surveillance of personal messages of friends, family members, employees, executives, journalists, human rights activists and even politicians themselves, which would fundamentally undermine everyone’s ability to communicate securely.’

Meanwhile, the UK government is set to give statutory powers to its digital regulator, **the Digital Markets Unit**. The watchdog sits within the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), the main competition regulator, and will target tech companies generating at least £25 billion globally, or £1 billion in the UK, with tailored rules.