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AI Round-Up: Recent EU and Irish Developments

The [EU AI Act](#) has continued its transition from legislative framework to practical regulatory regime, with important developments in recent weeks at both EU and national level.

This factsheet highlights some of the key milestones and developments regarding AI obligations, setting out what these updates mean for organisations and businesses in scope. Further information is available in McCann FitzGerald LLP's recent briefings addressing the new obligations arising for both [deployers](#) and [providers](#) of AI in Ireland (available at mccannfitzgerald.com).

Developments arising from the EU AI Act

Digital Omnibus on AI

The [Digital Omnibus on AI](#), amending the EU AI Act, came into effect on 27 July 2026, following its publication in the Official Journal of the EU on 24 July 2026. Key practical impacts include:

- Postponed timelines for certain high-risk AI obligations: rules for stand-alone high-risk systems will apply from 2 December 2027, and those embedded in safety-regulated products will apply from 2 August 2028.
- Watermarking requirements under Article 50(2) of the EU AI Act are postponed until 2 December 2026.
- An outright ban on AI tools that generate non-consensual sexually explicit content or child sexual abuse material, with compliance required by 2 December 2026.

Pursuant to the Digital Omnibus on AI, overlaps with product safety laws are now addressed, limited processing of special category personal data is permitted with safeguards, certain exemptions are extended to small mid-cap enterprises (SMCs), and general-purpose AI enforcement is now centralised in the EU's AI Office.

Key EU AI Act Provisions Now in Effect across EU

From 2 August 2026, [key provisions](#) of the [EU AI Act](#) have come into effect, with the European Commission's AI Office, national competent authorities and the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS) now empowered to commence enforcement in relation to the bulk of the Article 50(1), (3) and (4) transparency obligations, prohibited AI practices and certain rules governing general-purpose AI (GPAI) models.

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As noted above, transparency obligations under Article 50(2) will take effect from 2 December 2026, with further obligations for stand-alone high risk systems taking effect on 2 December 2027.

GPAI model operators should now be live to the possibility of related regulatory requests for information. Further information relating to the transparency compliance requirements can be found below.

Transparency under Article 50, EU AI Act

As covered in our last factsheet, on 20 July 2026, the European Commission published its [final guidelines on transparency obligations](#) for providers and deployers of certain AI systems under Article 50. The guidelines define the scope of the transparency obligations and clarify which providers and deployers must comply, including obligations in respect of marking and labelling AI-generated content such as deepfakes and AI-generated or manipulated content. They also address transparency requirements for interactive AI systems (eg chatbots), emotion recognition systems, and biometric categorisation systems.

These Article 50 obligations (with the exception of the Article 50(2) watermarking requirements, which will take effect on 2 December 2026) became applicable on 2 August 2026. The European Commission has [confirmed](#) that approximately 190 organisations had signed the [Code of Practice on Transparency of AI-generated Content](#) ahead of the deadline.

Complaints channel for GPAI Downstream Providers

On 31 July 2026, the European Commission published a [complaints channel](#) for downstream providers using GPAI models. The channel is notable because it recognises the practical position of downstream providers, who may depend on information and co-operation from GPAI model providers in order to understand and comply with their own obligations under the EU AI Act. Downstream providers integrating or building on GPAI models should consider whether the channel may be relevant where they encounter issues in obtaining the information needed to assess, document or manage their EU AI Act compliance obligations.

Cybersecurity: Cyber threats from advanced AI and the AI Action Plan

On 7 July 2026, the European Commission published an [Action Plan](#) on the cybersecurity risks and opportunities arising from advanced AI.

The Action Plan seeks to strengthen EU resilience against AI-enabled cyber threats through closer co-operation between Member States, industry and EU bodies, including:

- measures to evaluate advanced AI models, and to support secure access to AI systems for cybersecurity purposes,

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- establishing a secure testing platform for new AI applications by critical sectors such as energy, transport, health, finance and public administration, so as to enable them to safely test and deploy AI solutions, and
- promoting European AI cybersecurity solutions.

Developments arising from Ireland's Regulation of Artificial Intelligence Act 2026

The [Regulation of Artificial Intelligence Act 2026](#) ("Regulation of AI Act") came into operation on 31 July 2026, with that date also appointed as the establishment day for the Act under related [commencement](#) and [establishment](#) orders. Some of the key developments pursuant to the Regulation of AI Act include:

Establishment of new AI Office of Ireland

On 30 July 2026, the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment (DETE) announced the establishment of [Oifig IS na hÉireann \(the AI Office of Ireland\)](#) under the Regulation of AI Act, together with the appointment of Paul Byrne as its first Chief Executive Officer, and subsequently [appointed](#) members to its Board.

The AI Office of Ireland operates as the effective "AI regulator" of Ireland and is appointed, pursuant to the Regulation of AI Act, to:

- operate as the Single Point of Contact in Ireland for the EU AI Act for the European Commission, national sectoral regulators (being the market surveillance authorities and other notifying authorities, as designated) and the public;
- develop a consistent regulatory framework for the implementation in Ireland of the EU AI Act, and the Regulation of AI Act;
- facilitate centralised access to technical expertise for other competent authorities, as required; and
- drive AI innovation and adoption.

Additional Irish sector-specific regulators ("market surveillance authorities" and other notifying authorities) appointed to enforce the Regulation of AI Act

Prior to the Regulation of AI Act being commenced, several market surveillance authorities and notifying authorities were [appointed by way of statutory instrument](#) pursuant to the EU AI Act. Following commencement of the Regulation of AI Act the list of designated market surveillance authorities was updated by [further regulations](#).

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Each market surveillance authority has been appointed to act as the AI regulatory authority for its designated specific sector and particular issues arising therefrom, each reporting directly to the AI Office of Ireland and authorised to carry out certain administrative functions pursuant to the Regulation of AI Act. Officers of market surveillance authorities have extensive powers of entry, inspection, search, seizure and document production for the purposes of investigating potential breaches of the EU AI Act. Market surveillance authorities and their respective officers are also authorised to issue contravention notices and prohibition notices to organisations suspected of certain breaches of the EU AI Act.

Following investigation, the relevant market surveillance authority can refer certain matters for adjudication which may result in administrative penalties (including significant fines, set out in the EU AI Act) or further referral to the High Court in cases of suspected criminal offences pursuant to the Regulation of AI Act, which may be taken against individuals or otherwise against any director, secretary, manager or other office of a body corporate in certain cases. Summary proceedings for an offence under the Regulation of AI Act may be brought and prosecuted by the relevant market surveillance authority.

What Should Organisations Do Now?

The long-awaited commencement of both the EU AI Act and the Regulation of AI Act raises considerations for providers of AI systems and for those who deploy those systems in the course of their business. Some key considerations for organisations and businesses in Ireland will now include:

- whether it is necessary to conduct an audit for current use of AI systems across the business to identify which systems fall within the scope of new obligations under the EU AI Act, in particular relating to transparency obligations arising under Article 50;
- assessing whether existing disclosures and notices meet the requirements set out above, as expanded upon in the EU's transparency guidelines;
- implementing or updating transparency notices for interactive AI systems, biometric categorisation and emotion recognition systems, and any AI-generated content; and
- considering whether any additional steps will be required by the business to ensure compliance with both the EU AI Act and the Regulation of AI Act domestically, particularly if operating and deploying or providing AI systems in one of the sectors for which a market surveillance authority has been designated.

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How Can McCann FitzGerald Help?

For further information or assistance, please reach out to one of the key contacts below, or your usual contact at McCann FitzGerald LLP.

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