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Internet Access

EU: Council agrees new rates for wholesale mobile roaming

- EU Ministers agreed on new mobile wholesale roaming rates during the Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council of 2 December. Member States confirmed their agreement to **set a price cap for data sharing at €10 per gigabyte, decreasing every year until it reaches €5 in 2021.** The **maximum surcharge for phone calls** would be set at approximately **3.53 cents per minute.**
- This initial rate is higher than that agreed by the European Parliament the previous week. The **proposal** put forward by rapporteur Miapetra Kumpula-Natri MEP (Finland, S&D) suggested rates start at €4 per gigabyte in 2017, dropping to just €1 by 2021.
- Negotiations will now open between the European Parliament and the European Commission, falling under the Maltese presidency which will start on 1 January 2017.
- The European Parliament published a briefing 'Wholesale roaming regulation: A precondition for 'roam like at home'' giving an overview of the context of the proposal and legislative progress.

EU: EU to sign 'fair use' policy for mobile phone roaming rules

- The European Commission's proposal would remove fees for European citizens traveling within the EU from June 2017 and offer additional concessions to consumers – such as making telecom providers offer a 14-day alert period before adding surcharges for exceeding their roaming privileges.
- The proposal also aims to counter potential abuse of the system by consumers, by providing a clear definition regarding how consumers will have to demonstrate links to their home country in order to benefit from domestic phone deals.
- **A parliamentary source** explained that some MEPs are worried the Commission will impose a four-month limit on "free" mobile roaming: "time limits to free roaming can at the most be an interim solution, but must disappear soon."
- The source also claimed the four-month period would not be a considered a limit. Instead, it would be the allotted period of time before a telecom operator can send a warning message to a consumer.

EU: Council reaches partial agreement on Wi-Fi 4EU

- EU Member States reached a **partial compromise** on the **Wi-Fi 4EU package** on 2 December. The financial details of the proposal still need to be agreed and is expected to be finalised under the upcoming Maltese presidency, which begins on 1 January 2017.
- The proposal was published by the European Commission in September as part of its telecoms reform package, and will offer free public Wi-Fi in public spaces around Europe.
- The European Parliament hopes to finalise its position before the end of the Maltese Council presidency on 30 June 2017. Rapporteur Carlos Zorrinho MEP (Portugal, S&D) will present a draft report before the end of January 2017.
- A vote at the Committee for Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) is expected on 25 April 2017.

- There has been criticism over the €120 million allocated to this project; in response, the Commission has acknowledged its intention to secure further funding.

EU: Commission study on Ownership and Access to Data reveals legal vacuum

- The Commission released a new study on Ownership and Access to Data examining the current European legal landscape on access to and rights over data. The study found that data ownership is not explicitly dealt with by any legal instruments at EU and national level.
- The study noted this lack of coherence prevents businesses from managing their data efficiently and observed that businesses need to be extremely careful when giving others access to their data, as they risk losing their control over it.
- The study's findings will inform the Commission's upcoming "Building a European Data Economy" Communication, expected in January 2017.

Trust

EU: Social media companies efforts to combat online hate speech critiqued

- **The European Commission demanded increased efforts from social media companies in a review of posts flagged by users as illegal hate speech.** Following the signing of **Code of Conduct** to counter online hate speech online in May 2016, early findings on its efficacy have drawn criticism from officials.
- According to the Commission, of 600 posts flagged as potentially illegal, social media companies responded to 316 - 40 per cent within one day and another 48 per cent within two days; 163 posts were deleted and 153 items were not removed as companies did not consider they violated national legislation or internal company guidelines; in response, industry has called for additional direction from regulators.
- In parallel, on 5 December, **Facebook, Twitter, Microsoft and YouTube announced plans to cooperate in the fight against terrorist propaganda by creating a common database.** They will share digital fingerprints of violent images or videos so that the rest of members can scan their platforms.
- Having experiencing certain material being posted on different platforms, the companies have agreed to coordinate practices and jointly share information to ensure removal.
- It was also announced that the checking and removal of such material would be by human rather than algorithms.

Germany: Secret intelligence data revealed by WikiLeaks

- On 1 December, WikiLeaks released **90 gigabytes of information related to Germany's parliamentary inquiry into the activities of its foreign intelligence agency and the cooperation with the US National Security Agency.**
- The **WikiLeaks statement** included data from 2,420 documents belonging to government agencies, including the Federal Intelligence Service and the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution. The information relates to an inquiry from 2014 launched in response to revelations made by Edward Snowden that the US National Security Agency had spied on top German officials and partnered with intelligence services across the world, including that of Germany.

Turkey: Hackers rewarded for web attacks

- **A Turkish hacking group has turned web attacks into a game by rewarding people who successfully hit** designated targets - giving loyalty points to hackers for every short-lived attack they mount against a small number of websites.

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- Security firm Forcepoint discovered the site offering the points for attacks. Called "Surface Defence", the site is run from the Tor dark web network and gives hackers access to a web attack tool called Sledgehammer.
- **Targets included Kurdish campaign groups and media organisations**, **opposition political parties** and a site detailing the Armenian genocide. Also hit were the websites of **Germany's Christian Democratic Union and an Israeli film festival**.

EU: National ministers Council meeting tackling home affairs issues
- Based on a survey of EU 28 countries, the Slovak presidency discouraged Member States from drafting laws designed to undermine encrypted communication.
- Industry groups BSA, CCIA and DigitalEurope criticized the need for such laws; Thomas Boué Director General, Policy - EMEA of BSA stated that "law enforcement authorities' access to needed evidence can be achieved without the weakening of encryption or requiring localization of data."

Germany: Increased cyber spying threatens German politics and business
- Hans-Georg Maassen, head of the German security agency Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution, warned of efforts to "weaken or destabilize the Federal Republic of Germany," by Russian state actors who, he claimed, pretend to be hacktivists, in the latest in a series of German warnings over potential Russian interference in upcoming national elections in Septmber 2017.
- Germany industrial giant ThyssenKrupp was recently subject to a professional attack from Southeast Asia by cybercriminals attempting steal company secrets; the company is assessing the damage but claimed "data have been stolen in the areas involved in the attack."
- In a similar vein, **Alex Younger, head of the UK security service MI6, advocated the need for the UK to expose the magnitude of cyberwarfare and propaganda operations that subvert democracy** "The risks at stake are profound and represent a fundamental threat to our sovereignty. They should be a concern to all those who share democratic values."

Other

EU: Schulz offers support for Charter of Digital Fundamental Rights
- European parliament President Martin Schulz backed the European Parliament's LIBE Committee Charter of Digital Fundamental Rights which he believes could inspire the European Commission as it prepares its initiatives on data in January.
- Schulz has previously pushed for stronger data protections in trade agreements, as a way for the EU to guarantee citizens' privacy rights in the rest of the world.
- Schulz is expected to become the Social democrat candidate for the Chancellorship in the German 2017 elections and indicated his preparedness to get more involved in digital issues.