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Internet Access

EU: Bruegel's article on the future of roaming after Brexit

- In its article "Can roaming be saved after Brexit?" published on September 21, Bruegel, the economics think tank, argues that the only realistic possibility for the UK to maintain inexpensive roaming with the EU depends on agreeing on low wholesale roaming prices as part of the Brexit negotiations. Negotiated low wholesale rates would be beneficial for both the UK and the EU.
- The authors believe that the goal should be to achieve low but sustainable prices similar to those currently in place, or those which held in the first half of 2016, rather than to implement RLAH arrangements; either way, negotiated low wholesale prices are deemed necessary.
- The article outlines a series of guidelines which should be taken into consideration during the negotiations.

EU: Broadband coverage mapping 2016 published

- On September 25, European Commission's DG CONNECT published a study on "Mapping progress towards the coverage objectives of the Digital Agenda". This monitors the progress of EU countries toward their specific broadband coverage goals, notably: "Universal Broadband Coverage with speeds at least 30 Mbps by 2020" and "Broadband Coverage of 50% of households with speeds of at least 100 Mbps by 2020."
- Over 218 million EU households (99.9%) had access to at least one of the main fixed or mobile broadband access technologies at the end of June 2016, this is a 0.1 percentage point increase compared to previous year. Fixed broadband coverage increased by 0.2 percentage points, reaching 97.5% of households by mid-2016.
- Next generation access services raised by 5.5 percentage points to cover 75.9% of households across the EU by mid-2016. This means that over 166 million households in the EU had access to next generation broadband by the end of June 2016.
- Rural broadband coverage stayed significantly lower than national coverage. While 92.6% of rural EU households were covered by at least one broadband technology in mid-2016, less than 40% (39.2%) had access to next generation services.

EU: Eurobarometer survey on Roam-Like-At-Home awareness
- A Flash Eurobarometer survey, released on September 26, highlighted a large majority of Europeans recognise the benefits of roaming without extra charges.
- The survey shows that 71% of Europeans know that roaming charges have ended and 72% think they will benefit from it. Awareness of the new rules raised to 86% amongst those who have travelled since 15 June, when charges came to an end.
- European Commission Vice-President Andrus Ansip said "the new EU telecoms rules will encourage new investments" and invited the European Parliament and Member States to adopt the new law as soon as possible.
- Digital Commissioner Mariya Gabriel said the fact that roam like at home is working is "an example of how the EU improves the life of its citizens."

EU: DIGITALEUROPE invited EU leaders to focus on connectivity and cybersecurity at the Tallinn Digital Summit
- In a paper published on September 28, ahead of the Tallinn Digital Summit, DIGITALEUROPE, the European organisation that represents the digital technology industry, invited EU leaders to focus on digital infrastructure & connectivity, data flow, cybersecurity and skills.
- DIGITALEUROPE believes urgent action is needed for 5G and a gigabit society, as "5G has the potential to boost the economy by 113 billion while accounting for 2 million jobs by 2025."
- The paper also stressed the importance of strong rules to restrict data localisation and of reinforcing the EU's cybersecurity capacity, by further combining and coordinating efforts across the region, and by improving security hygiene at all levels of society, business and public sector.

VP Ansip and Commissioner Gabriel at telecoms conference
- Both Commission Vice President Andrus Ansip and Commissioner Mariya Gabriel addressed the FT-ETNO conference in Brussels on 27 September.
- Commissioner Gabriel delivered her first speech on telecoms since taking up her mandate as digital commissioner. She defended the Commission proposal from 2016 and criticised efforts by the Council and the Parliament to move away from the significant market power regime that has been the centre of EU telecoms regulation in recent years.
- VP Ansip meanwhile addressed the issue of international calls, saying he didn't really see the need for the price cap measures being suggested in the parliament as there were other ways to promote affordable solutions.

EU: New European Commission guidelines to tackle illegal content online
- On September 28, the European Commission unveiled new guidelines and principles for removing illegal content online, essentially following the lines of existing rules, but also suggesting a possible future harmonisation of practices.
- In the coming months, the Commission will continue dialogues with online platforms and relevant stakeholders, monitor progress and assess whether additional measures are needed, including possible legislative measures by May 2018.
- According to Digital Commissioner Mariya Gabriel, the current situation is not sustainable, since "in more than 28 percent of cases, it takes more than one week for online platforms to take down illegal content".

Trust

EU: Industry calls for G7 Ministers to promote Innovation, Digital Technologies, and Development
- On 22 September, a group of technology and broader industry advocacy groups unveiled a set of recommendations for the Ministers of Industry ahead of the G7 ICT Industry Ministerial that took place in Italy on 25-26 September.
- The signatories (including DIGITALEUROPE, Syntec and techUK), set out a series of recommended outcomes for promoting innovation, digital technologies, and development.
- Of particular importance are privacy and data protection; the facilitation of free flow of data; coordinated efforts to secure digital technologies and protect companies; aligned global, voluntary, industry-led standards; and trade secret protection.

EU: Trade associations call for boosted connectivity, room for innovation, and trust
- On 25 September, ahead of the Tallinn Digital Summit, a number EU trade associations sent a joint letter to Estonian Prime Minister, Jüri Ratas, and President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, asking for a re-evaluation of the current direction of the EU Digital Single Market legislative debate and the plans to unify Europe's online market.
- The groups called for efforts to boost infrastructure deployment for best-in-class connectivity in the EU; remove unjustified data localisation rules to enable cross-border data flows in the EU; better Member States coordination, public awareness and flexible market-driven solutions to advance security and trust across the region.
- The signatories of the letter are Cable Europe, the Computer & Communications Industry Association (CCIA Europe), DIGITALEUROPE, ETNO, GSMA and Allied for Startups.

EU: Could Germany privacy concerns affect industrial innovation?
- A POLITICO article earlier this week claimed that Germany still needs to find the right balance between privacy protection, data sharing and digital innovation. According to the article, the country's strict laws, and people's privacy concerns, could make it difficult for companies to digitalize and develop Internet of Things devices and services.
- Industry 4.0 remains of crucial importance for Germany. According to Klaus zu Hoene, a data protection expert, "Germans still have a reluctance to hand over their personal data but that won't stop industry. They are already working on new business models."

Global: G7 ICT-Industry Ministerial Meeting 2017
- On September 25-26, the G7 ICT and Industry Ministers met in Turin and addressed several topics including the next production revolution, digital infrastructures and artificial intelligence, and cybersecurity for business.
- In their final declaration on "Making the next production revolution inclusive, open and secure," the Ministers stressed the importance of cyber-security for businesses, in particular for SMEs, of the promotion of security by design approaches, and emphasized the needs to strengthen the efforts to improve risk management.
- The declaration invites governments and industry to work closely together to exchange best practices on tackling cyber threats.

EU: EP IMCO Committee adopt opinion on ePrivacy
- On September 28, the European Parliament Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO) adopted its ePrivacy opinion, with 19 votes in favour, 13 against and 5 abstentions.

- The rapporteur, MEP Eva Maydell (EPP, BG) believes that the new proposal should only clarify the provisions of General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), set to enter into force in May 2018, and fill the regulatory gaps where they exist, but should not go beyond the requirements of the GDPR and create additional barriers and burdens.
- The opinion states that overregulation and complex procedures that impede the evolution of the Digital Single Market and the satisfaction of end-users' demands, would be counterproductive and burdensome for both consumers and businesses.

Others

EU: EU leaders gather in Tallinn to discuss the digital future of the EU
- On September 29, EU heads of state and government met at the Tallinn Digital Summit to discuss the steps needed to enable people, enterprises and governments to fully exploit the potential of innovative technologies and digitalisation.
- The discussions focussed on security, the development of public services and new infrastructure, as well as lifelong learning and digital literacy.