European Regional Bureau Newsletter

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Internet Access

EU: ETNO and GSMA fear lack of ambition on EU spectrum reform

- As the European Parliament and Member States discuss amendments to the draft European Electronic Communications Code, the European Telecommunications Network Operators' Association (ETNO) and the GSM Association (GSMA) have, in a joint statement, expressed fear that legislators have abandoned their ambitions for 5G roll-out in Europe.
- Director General of ETNO, Lise Fuhr, stated: "The EU institutional debate risks delaying a major source of societal and economic growth. 5G is the essential platform to provide new services to consumers and businesses".

EU: EP IMCO discusses European Electronic Communication Code (Recast)

- With the deadline for amendments to its opinion on the revision of the EU's telecommunications framework approaching (10 May), the European Parliament's Committee on Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO) held a meeting to discuss the draft. Dita Charanzová (ALDE, CZ) was IMCO's rapporteur for the opinion.
- In their comments MEPs dealt with various issues including the universal service obligation, contract duration and portability, Internet accessibility for people with disabilities and intra-EU calls. Members were divided over the issue of full harmonisation of end-user rights.

EU: EP IMCO adopts report on eGovernment Action Plan 2016-2020

- The European Parliament Committee on Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO) approved MEP Sabine Verheyen (EPP, DE)'s report on the EU eGovernment Action Plan 2016-2020.
- Among other things, the report highlights the importance of access to digital public services, and stresses the need for continuous support for broadband expansion. It also outlines the need for open data and to improve the digital skills of administrative staff.
- A debate on the report is scheduled for the next plenary session in Strasbourg on 15 May, followed by a vote on 16 May.

EU: EU tech firms call for platform legislation
- Several tech companies, including Spotify, Deezer and Rocket Internet, have addressed a letter to the European Commission proposing concrete platform legislation to prevent situations in which platforms turn into gatekeepers and abuse their privileged position.
- The letter calls for a "legislative framework covering business-to-business practices, based on non-controversial principles like non-discrimination, transparency, consumer choice and interoperability"

Trust

EU: Industry Coalition on Data Protection calls on EU to ban data localization
- On 26 April, the Industry Coalition on Data Protection (ICDP) sent a letter to the European Commission calling on the issue of data localization.
- The ICDP called on "the European Commission to present, without delay, an EU Regulation banning existing and future data localization measures, both in national legislation and public procurement rules, and enshrining the general principle of the free movement of data in EU law".

Belgium: Belgium adopts cyber emergency plan
- On 28 April, the Belgian government approved a national cyber emergency developed by the Center for Cyber Security (CCB). The plan aims at coordinating security and emergency services in the event of a state-targeted cyberattack against nuclear, banking, railway, telecoms and other facilities.
- The Belgian government started drafting its emergency plan in 2015, following the adoption of the Network and Information Security Directive, which obliged countries to implement a national cybersecurity strategy.

EU: Free flow of data a priority of the upcoming Estonian presidency of the Council of the EU
- Estonian Prime Minister Jüri Ratas stressed digital affairs will be a priority of his country's presidency from 1 July 2017. Estonia will focus on promoting an "open and innovative" continent and "a digital Europe and the free movement of data".
- Commenting on the Presidency's plans, Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker said: "We would like Estonia to focus on digital because Estonia has a real outstanding expertise on digital." Andrus Ansip, the Commission Vice-President for digital affairs also met Urve Palo, Estonia's Minister for entrepreneurship and technology this week.

EU: Europol's new regulation entering into force
- On 1 May, Europol's new Regulation entered into force and takes effect in all EU Member States. The new regulation was adopted on 11 May 2016 and establishes Europol as the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation. The regulation provides updated powers to enable Europol to step up efforts to fight terrorism, cybercrime and other serious and organised forms of crime.
- On 2 May, Europol, in a coordinated EU action, took down 2,068 pieces of terrorist content linked to ISIS and al-Qaeda hosted on 52 online platforms.

EU: European Commission states Brexit deal should solve police data exchange
- On 3 May, the European Commission said that the Brexit negotiations will include talks about how data in investigations is exchanged during and, in some cases, even after the UK's exit from the EU.

- According to the [Annex](#) to the European Commission's Recommendation for a Council Decision, the EU and British police and investigators should continue to have access to data and electronic evidence for cases that are ongoing when the U.K. leaves the bloc.

EU: European Commission unveils new proposal on access to corporate data

- On 2 May, the European Commission unveiled a [proposal](#) that could significantly expand its powers to request access to sensitive corporate data as a way to enforce EU single market rules or to inform new pieces of legislation.
- According to the proposal, firms which refuse to comply could be fined up to 1% of their turnover from the previous year, on top of a possible fine of up to 5% of daily turnover. In "targeted" cases, when neither national authorities nor the companies involved have voluntarily provided the information, the European Commission would be able to request the data directly from the firms.
- Companies have already spoken up opposing the proposal, arguing it would force them to disclose "sensitive" business information to EU authorities upon request.

EU: EU privacy watchdog targets Big Data and Artificial Intelligence

- On 5 May, European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS), Giovanni Buttarelli, said at the presentation of the EDPS' [annual report](#) that his office will watch closely how Internet companies use big data and artificial intelligence.
- Giovanni Buttarelli has also stated "this issue should be more at the top of EDPS' political agenda" and the watchdog should be "as data protection authorities, more inclusive towards new technologies".