

European Regional Bureau Newsletter



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Internet Access

EU: WiFi4EU regulation published in the Official Journal of the EU

- On October 25, the Regulation on the promotion of internet connectivity in local communities ([WiFi4EU](#)) was published in the [Official Journal](#) of the EU.
- The initiative aims to promote free Wi-Fi connectivity in public spaces across Europe and increase accessibility to high-performance mobile Internet. The budget of the WiFi4EU scheme is €120 million for the next two years.
- The European Parliament approved the proposal on September 12 and the final adoption in Council took place on October 9.

EU: Public consultation on draft BEREC-RSPG report on connectivity in challenge areas

- On October 31, the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC) and the Radio Spectrum Policy Group (RSPG) published a [draft joint report](#) on facilitating mobile connectivity in challenge areas. On the same day, a [public consultation](#) on the draft report has been launched.
- The report assesses a variety of initiatives aimed to facilitate mobile connectivity in what are described as 'challenge areas', where mobile connectivity is limited or absent. It describes the challenges encountered and the solutions suggested or implemented in these areas.
- These solutions include network sharing, state involvement through planning reforms and specific laws, and cooperation and dialogue between public and private stakeholders.
- The public consultation will run from 31 October to 28 November.

Global: Intel to power 5G at 2018 Olympic Winter Games

- On October 31, Intel [announced](#) its intention to develop the world's largest 5G showcase, in cooperation with KT Corporation (a South Korean communications provider), during the 2018 Winter Games in PyeongChang.
- On that occasion, KT Corporation will deliver the first broad-scale 5G network paired with Intel 5G solutions that will enable practical on-site 5G-powered experiences.

UK: Digital Minister addresses Broadband Stakeholder Group Conference

- On November 2, the UK Minister for Digital, Matt Hancock, in a [speech](#) delivered at the Broadband Stakeholder Group 2017 conference, reaffirmed the UK Government's commitment to a full fibre and 5G future.
- The Minister said the country is investing £1.1 billion in digital infrastructure to support the next generation connectivity. The Government is determined to deliver high speed broadband to all by 2020.
- Minister Hancock also expressed concerns over the speed at which BT Group is moving in “formally implementing the split with OpenReach”, agreed last year. He said the Government would need “to talk to Ofcom” if significant progress was not made in the near future.

EU: BEREC 2017 4th Contact Network Meeting

- The 4th Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC) [Contact Network meeting](#) for 2017 will take place on November 16-17, in Malta.
- The Contact Network will discuss net neutrality, next generation networks, as well as international roaming tariffs and connectivity in challenge areas.
- The meeting will prepare the 33rd ordinary plenary meetings of the BEREC Board of Regulators and the BEREC Office Management Committee (December 7-8, Denmark).

Germany: Should fast Internet be a fundamental right?

- On November 3, Germany's Acting Finance Minister and Chancellor Angela Merkel's chief of staff, Peter Altmaier, [said](#) “an uninterrupted, good mobile network and fast Internet are part of the public welfare and, as such, a fundamental right.”
- He suggested the issue should be part of the ongoing talks between the parties of the possible national coalition (Greens, Liberal Free Democrats and Christian Democrats).
- The expansion of digital infrastructure is one of the few points on which the parties have already [agreed](#).

EU: Trilogue meetings on the European Electronic Communications Code

- The second meeting on telecoms between the three co-legislators (European Parliament, Commission and Council of the EU) will take place on December 6.
- The co-legislators want to hold four additional trilogues and reach an agreement by April 2018. However, negotiations could continue until summer next year.
- The discussions cover a vast array of issues, including intra-EU calls charges, spectrum licenses, encryption and networks access.

EU: DIGITALEUROPE Director General stresses need for seamless connectivity

- On October 24, at the [Manufuture 2017](#) conference in Tallinn, DIGITALEUROPE Director General Cecilia Bonefeld-Dahl [said](#) the EU needs seamless connectivity, as a core enabler for digital innovation (i.e. the deployment of the Internet of Things).
- She argued digital technologies can leverage productivity and competitiveness, and that a strong digital infrastructure, digital skills, a safe cyber environment are key enablers for European companies to thrive in the digital era.
- The Manufuture 2017 event brought together almost 600 leading representatives from industry, public Institutions and academia to discuss the future of European industry.

Trust

EU: Google appeal claims EU misstated facts when imposing record fine

- On October 31, a summary of Google’s appeal against the EU record €2.42 billion fine has been [published](#) on the Official Journal of the EU.
- Google has based its appeal on six arguments. Among these, it claims that the Court erred in finding that Google was favouring its own shopping services via its practice of grouping paid ads on top of product search results pages.
- It also argued that the European Commission misstates the facts and said a fine “was not warranted” on the grounds that the Commission “advanced a novel theory, selected the case for commitments, and previously rejected the remedy.”
- Google attacked the Court for speculating about potential anti-competitive effects without actually evaluating market conditions.
- The company submitted its appeal on September 11. The European Commission has not yet said when it will consider it or how long it will take to reach a final decision.

EU: Council supports consultation of the Committee of the Regions on cybersecurity file

- In a [note](#) published on October 27, the Council welcomes the Commission’s suggestion to consult the Committee of the Regions (CoR) on the [proposal for a Regulation](#) on ENISA (the Cybersecurity Agency) and on the Cybersecurity Act.
- The Permanent Representatives Committee (COREPER) is thus invited to decide to consult the CoR and to ask for its opinion as soon as possible.
- The proposed regulation would expand the powers of the EU’s cybersecurity agency, ENISA, and set the basis for a future cybersecurity certification scheme for Internet of Things products and services.

EU: BUSINESSEUROPE addresses Commission First Vice-President on data flows

- On October 30, BUSINESSEUROPE, the EU business association, [urged](#) European Commission First Vice-President Timmermans to “develop a position that will enable the EU to advance on cross-border free flow of data in trade negotiations.”
- In its letter to Vice-President Timmermans, BUSINESSEUROPE stated that it supports a solution that enables cross-border data flows and tackles forced data localisation when disproportionate and unjustified.
- It argues that cross-border data flows are essential to global trade and contribute in the growth of the economy as a whole. Hence, an agreement on the topic should be found as matter of urgency.