

European Regional Bureau Newsletter



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Internet Access

EU: New data portability rules enter into force

- New EU-wide rules on data portability of online content came into force on April 1st, enabling consumers to access their personal video and music streaming services in the same way as they travel in the EU as when they view the content at home.
- The [proposal](#), first presented by the European Commission in December 2015, was designed to account for video-on-demand platforms (Netflix, HBO Go, Amazon Prime, Mubi), online TV services (Sky's Now TV), and music streaming services (Spotify and Deezer).
- Commissioner Andras Ansip welcomed this announcement, [tweeting](#) that it was bringing consumers one step closer to a Digital Single Market.

EU: ETNO supportive of the EU's investment plans on digitisation

- ETNO, the association representing Europe's leading telecom operators, released a [statement](#) this week supporting the European Commission's decision to include a Digital Europe Programme within its proposed list of instruments for the EU's next multi-annual budget.
- The EU's funding priorities, according to ETNO, should include: doubling the current budget dedicated to digitisation projects, funding cutting-edge technologies with "mission-oriented" and "close-to-market" programmes, focusing on 5G technologies, anticipating their evolution and application, promoting attention to ICT platforms, media & content technologies. But also, safeguarding a predictable IPR framework to foster innovation across the digitisation value chain, and finally, measures to ensure public money for connectivity is used efficiently and does not distort the market.

Germany: New government to push for greater mobile connectivity in rural areas

- Andreas Scheuer, Germany's minister for transport and digital infrastructure, has vowed to plug the holes in Germany's mobile network coverage and suggested users download an app to help detect the gaps.
- Minister Scheuer [described](#) the state of Germany's current mobile network as "intolerable" for a major economic power, which, according to research company

OpenSignal, enabled fewer than six in ten mobile phone users (58.8%) in Germany to reach the so-called LTE (Long Term Evolution) high-speed networks when they need it, well behind South Korea, Japan, and USA, which all report much higher levels (above 85%) of LTE availability.

- While the government develops its long-term approach, the minister announced that the Federal Network Agency would already develop an application on the model of traffic jam detectors. This app would allow mobile users to signal gaps immediately to the network operator, which would in turn have a better idea of where to place new signal towers.

UK: Record 5G auction as mobile groups try to accelerate their UK networks

- The UK government has [raised](#) £1.35bn, a record for 5G auctions, as four bidding mobile networks vied to secure portions of the UK's airwaves.
- The four companies (O2, Vodafone, EE and Three) all competed for spectrum in the 3.4GHz range, needed to launch 5G connectivity.
- The £1.35bn raised is much lower than previous sales for 3G licences, which reached £22.5bn when the UK Treasury sold the licences in 2000, and still lower than the 4G auctions in 2013 at £2.3bn and that were considered a disappointing result for the government.
- But despite the lower level of proceeds compared to 4G and 3G, the prices paid for 5G were above expectations, which according to analyst Matthew Howett quoted in the Financial Times, shows how valuable the airwaves are to the mobile operators.

Trust

Global: Facebook's Cambridge Analytica scandal goes global

- Privacy regulators from the United Kingdom to India and Israel have opened investigations into potential abuses of local privacy standards, following Facebook's admission on Wednesday that up to 87 million global users may have had their data illegally handled by Cambridge Analytica, the London-based data analytics firm.
- While the U.S. Federal Trade Commission decides whether Facebook broke a federal privacy ruling in 2011, the UK's Information Commissioner's [Office](#) and India's information technology [ministry](#) started investigations into whether the company broke their own laws. Countries affected also include the Philippines, Indonesia, Mexico, Canada, Vietnam and Brazil.

EU: Mark Zuckerberg says Facebook will (partially) apply the GDPR globally

- Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg [announced](#) on Wednesday 5 April that his company intended to implement the provisions contained in the General Data Protection Regulation, Europe's newly-strengthened privacy standards, across its entire global network.
- Responding to the fallout caused by the Cambridge Analytica scandal, Zuckerberg said he was prepared to change Facebook's privacy settings to go beyond the privacy standards currently available in the US and outside the EU. These changes would enable Facebook's users to revoke how data is used by the social network if they believe their digital information is being misused.
- Emily Sharpe, a London-based privacy and public policy manager at Facebook, explained that while certain features of the GDPR would be rolled out globally,

other regulatory steps required to gain users' online consent, particularly around the collection of sensitive data (political or religious affiliation), would only apply within the EU.

France: Macron launches AI strategy with €1.5bn planned investments until 2022

- French President Emmanuel Macron [released](#) his government's AI strategy on Thursday 29 March with ambitious plans to make France a leader in artificial intelligence.
- The report, led by mathematician and MP Cédric Villani, sets out measures to boost data sharing in France, particularly between private actors, and supports the right to greater data portability to enable individuals to move more easily between different ecosystems without losing their data history.
- The strategy targets four strategic sectors (health, transport, environment and defence) in which France already has a competitive edge, while also encouraging the co-financing of Franco-German projects, something German Research Minister Anja Karliczek welcomed, stating that "German and French companies need to become leaders in the face of Chinese and American companies".
- The French report is expected to feed-in to the European Commission's own-strategy on AI, which will be released on Wednesday 25 April 2018.

EU: ITRE Committee releases draft report on the Cyber Act

- The European Parliament's Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) [released](#) its amendments on the "Cybersecurity Act", a regulation intending to give a funding boost to the EU's cyber agency ENISA and set up an EU-wide cybersecurity certification scheme.
- The amendments proposed by the rapporteur Angelika Niebler (EPP, Germany) would go beyond the Commission's proposal to strengthen cybersecurity oversight at European level.
- For ENISA, the rapporteur wants a wider scope of competencies for the agency's permanent stakeholder group and a bigger role for the agency overall in assessing critical cross-border infrastructure through the provision of security audits.
- On the certification framework, Niebler's amendments include adding a mandatory requirement for high-risk products (where the EC had initially set out a voluntary, opt-in approach) and the inclusion of "processes" alongside products, meaning companies would need to have an internal process in place to keep their data safe.
- The proposed draft amendments will be discussed in the ITRE committee and voted on 19 June. Meanwhile governments from Member States continue to discuss in parallel in the Council of the EU's working groups.

Netherlands: Dutch bank boosts data-protection measures in anticipation of GDPR

- Dutch bank Rabobank is working with ICT company IBM to install a system that would enable the bank to "pseudonymise" the bank's personal data.
- The measure [announced](#) on April 5 would mean that data leading back to an individual is swapped with other identifiers to make it more secure.
- The announcement is the latest example of how hardware providers like IBM are increasingly providing privacy technology, especially to the financial sector, in

anticipation of the EU's strengthened data protection rules, as the General Data Protection Regulation comes into force on May 25 2018.

