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Internet Access

EU: Digital Europe launches its manifesto for a stronger digital Europe by 2025

- The tech association DIGITALEUROPE launched this week a call to action for a stronger digital Europe by 2025 during its Masters of Digital flagship conference.
- This call comes at a crucial time for Europe decision-making as EU leaders anticipate the EU elections in May 2019.
- DIGITALEUROPE identifies several priorities for 2025, including enhancing digital development to drive social inclusion, building a framework for a sustainable Europe that leverages the potential of digital technologies and promoting digital leadership in public sector services across the EU
- The seven focus areas where Europe can take leadership in the digital age are: fostering competition in the Digital Single Market; ensuring inclusion through digital skills; green growth and leveraging new forms clean-tech to accelerate the shift towards a resource-efficient society; Innovation through investment into 5G and AI; Trust through new laws to restore confidence online; Agile & mission-based policy; and, Leadership by ensuring Europe's decision-makers set out a clear vision on "what they want" to improve European society through digital.

EU: The European Commission calls for tenders for phase II of the European 5G Observatory via an open procedure

- After the completion of the first phase of the European 5G Observatory (E5GO) study in September 2018, this follow-up study will continue contributing to the relevant information needs by the Commission on the realm of 5G.
- The E5GO, established in the framework of the European Commission 5G Action Plan, has the function to guarantee the availability of quantitative and qualitative information on actual and expected market developments by private and public actors in the area of 5G.
- The study has two objectives: i) to continue providing for a repository of structured up-to-date qualitative and quantitative information on 5G to be made

accessible as an online platform, and ii) to report periodically on the progress of the relevant 5G developments and provide a third party assessment

- The call for tenders is open until 11 March 2019, and the maximum amount allocated to the study is EUR 300.000.

EU: European Broadband Competence Offices (BCO) Network presents its Activity Report

- The European Broadband Competence Offices (BCO) Network presented this week their 2018 Activity Report.
- The report describes the year's knowledge-sharing and capacity-building programme under the objectives of connecting, sharing knowledge and building capacity, growing at regional level and strengthening the Network.
- In 2018, BCO has discussed services for rural and remote areas, state aid, demand-side measures, technological neutrality, last mile connection and services BCOs can offer
- The network released this January their 2019 Annual Work Plan.

EU: Increasing uncertainty as the Barcelona Mobile World Congress approaches

- President Trump stated yesterday that he wanted 5G and 6G technology to be deployed in the US as soon as possible, adding that he wants "the US to win by competition, not by blocking out currently more advanced technologies", at the same time as Trump is closing an US-China deal.
- Meanwhile in Brussels, Martin Selmayr, former Chief of Staff to Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker and currently Secretary-General of the European Commission, told attendees at the Masters of Digital event "not to be naïve" regarding 5G and Huawei, emphasising that a real security risk existed.
- The European telecoms sector is reportedly divided on how to address the issue of Chinese cybersecurity. The industry's association, the GSMA, attempted to build consensus ahead of the Mobile World Congress by issuing a statement defending vendor diversity, but faced strong opposition from a major US association CTIA, which responded saying GSMA's move "does not represent the views of all wireless operators or all regions."

Trust

EU: Twitter lays new plans to combat fake news ahead of EU elections

- Twitter this week announced that it would be introducing measures to increase transparency around political advertising before the EU elections in May 2019.
- For political adverts, users will be able to access information about the billing information, ad spend, and impressions data per Tweet as well as seeing the demographic that the ad is targeting.
- Twitter's move follows similar actions by both Google and Facebook earlier this year. All three companies are signatories of the European Commission's self-regulatory Code of Practice to tackle disinformation and have been coming under increasing pressure in recent months from EU policy-makers to take action.

- This week, Member States adopted Council Conclusions on the elections "welcoming the progress made on implementing the code of practice [on disinformation], [EU countries] call on online platforms to invest the necessary resources to deal with election-related online activities, in a responsible, accountable and consistent manner."
- Microsoft also this week outlined plans to help protect EU institutions from cyber-attacks during the upcoming election campaigns.

EU: Microsoft VP announced new steps to protect Europe from cyber threats

- This week, the company's Corporate Vice President on Customer Security & Trust, Tom Burt, announced the expansion of Microsoft AccountGuard to twelve new markets across Europe.
- This security service provides comprehensive threat detection and notification to eligible organizations at no additional cost and customized help to secure their systems.
- This comes in the framework of multiple attempts and actual disinformation attacks to multiple European organisations.

EU: 'Small platforms' are the target of online terrorist content regulation, says leading MEP

- The European Parliament's LIBE Committee under the Rapporteurship of MEP Daniel Dalton (ECR, UK) is taking regulatory measures to counteract the dissemination of terrorist content online.
- The Report seeks to prevent any radicalisation processes from taking place online, both with regards to socialisation and access to information that guide individuals on how to prepare a terrorist attack.
- MEP Dalton believes that "big platforms" do not tend to be a problem, as they take voluntary actions to prevent the dissemination of terrorist content online. However, he finds the problem to be around smaller platforms "who are either inundated with offending content, or are basically not responding to the authorities' requests for the removal of content".

EU: 5th Security Dialogue with Commissioner for the Security Union Julian King

- On 19 February, the Parliament's LIBE Committee held the Fifth Security Dialogue with Commissioner Julian King,
- The exchange of views focused on the state of play of the Security Union, and the Commissioner highlighted the number of files that had already been concluded.
- He noted that while progress was made in the field of energy security, more work needs to be done to improve online trust, which the Commission's is addressing, inter alia, through its proposals on the dissemination of terrorist content online.

UK: British cyber agency chief says Huawei has been deeply overseen

- According to the British cybersecurity agency chief, Huawei had the "toughest and most rigorous oversight regime" by the British agency to check security risks of Chinese telecom equipment vendors like Huawei.
- The statement comes in the framework of a US campaign against Huawei, who have pushed their European allies to take a stronger stance against the Chinese company, saying that they might not be able to share information with the countries that allow Chinese telecommunications giant Huawei to participate in the development of their next-generation 5G mobile networks.
- The cybersecurity agency is also working to finalize an annual oversight report scrutinizing Huawei's security. Officials are likely to increase the pressure on Huawei in that report, following the concerns made in their previous report in July.