

# European Regional Bureau Newsletter



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## Internet Access

### EU: Wi-Fi technology - Commission's plan for connected car communications standards

- A leaked technical document from the Commission reveals that it favours existing Wi-Fi technology for the next generation of connected cars over the possibilities offered by 5G technology.
- The European Commission is working on a framework to address the technical principles and strategies for connected cars, referred to as "cooperative and intelligent transport systems", and sensor-installed road infrastructure.
- The text sets Wi-Fi technology as a standard and a requisite that future systems based on 5G telecom networks will need to ensure backward compatibility.
- The European automotive, and telecoms, industry is deeply divided with regards to which technology to use. Carmakers such as BMW prefer to pursue 5G technology, others like Volkswagen and Toyota are moving ahead with in-vehicle Wi-Fi.
- The Commission has pressed industry to start moving onto the next generation of vehicles and mobility services and not wait for alternative technologies to mature.

### EU: The European Commission prepares 5G security guidance for mid-April

- According to the [agenda](#) of the College of Commissioners, the Commission is aiming at releasing recommendations to Member States on how to handle Chinese telecom equipment maker Huawei.
- The text is being drafted by the Commission's Vice-President Andrus Ansip and will most likely address the EU's different instruments on how to beef up the security of telecom networks such as the Cybersecurity Act, public procurement and data protection rules.
- The Commission has also announced that procurement rules could be updated and that delegated acts would be used under the Directive on security of network and information systems (NIS Directive). This would force telecom operators to

work under stricter procurement rules when buying equipment from Chinese telecom vendors like Huawei and ZTE.

## Trust

### Global: Transatlantic Working Group to tackle illegal content online

- In the context of electoral manipulation in the EU and the US, the Transatlantic Working Group is seeking to address harmful content online while protecting freedom of speech.
- The Transatlantic High-Level Working Group on Content Moderation and Online Freedom of Speech will scrutinize how governments are elaborating public policies to regulate content online.
- These will include the German NetzDG law banning hate speech online; a recent French law empowering judges to order removal of fake news during election campaigns, and proposals in the US to revisit the ‘safe harbor’ liability protection for platforms that upload user-generated content.

### Global: Facebook to become more “intimate”

- Mark Zuckerberg has released a document on how Facebook will be shifting from an open platform to *‘intimate space like a living room’*. According to the 3,000 words document, the social platform is seeking the opportunity to build a platform that focuses on the ways people want to interact privately.
- According to [experts](#), the shift in Facebook’s business strategy can be explained by the EU strengthening of privacy regulations which make it increasingly difficult to manage user’s data without their consent.

### EU: Cybersecurity – “There is a need for basic infrastructure investment at Member State level”, says senior Commission official

- During a conference organised this week by the Wilfred Martens Centre in Brussels, Jakub Boratynsk, Head of the Cybersecurity and Digital Privacy Unit at the European Commission, addressed the challenges brought about by recent cyber-attacks in the EU and in the US.
- During his keynote speech, Jakub Boratynsk stressed the importance of investment in cybersecurity so that network infrastructure can better resist attacks. In his view, the NIS Directive gives a good indication what needs to be done by all relevant parties.
- He added that the Commission will submit a report to the European Parliament by May 2019 assessing the consistency of the approach taken by Member States in identifying operators of essential services. By May 2021, a new report will describe the overall functioning of the NIS Directive.

### EU: Huawei highlights lack of basic global common understanding on cybersecurity

- Ken Hu, Huawei's rotating chairman, [stated earlier this week](#) at the opening of the company's cybersecurity centre in Brussels, that governments and business worldwide lack a basic common understanding of cybersecurity issues.
- Hu stressed that the lack of understanding could lead to difficulties in aligning expectations and responsibilities and added that "industry lacks a unified set of technical standards for security [...] and cybersecurity management lacks legislative support, and cybersecurity enforcement is not mature".
- The event was attended by the Member of the European Parliament Peter Koroumbashev (S&D, Bulgaria) who said that the recently adopted Cybersecurity Act aimed at avoiding fragmentation in security standards across the EU.

#### EU: ePrivacy regulation - A challenge for the industry?

- BusinessEurope released yesterday a [statement](#) under the title 'Europe set to legislate itself out of the digital economy'. While the association recognises the crucial importance of the principle of confidentiality, in relation to the existing draft, it shows strong disagreement with a legislative process that opts for speed over quality.
- The platform advocates for a more holistic and strategic thinking and believes a risk-based approach aligned with GDPR is required.
- In their view, Articles 6 and 8 of the draft regulation need to include the same legal basis as in Article 6 of the GDPR, including permitting further processing for all types of personal data with appropriate safeguards.

#### EU: Written question on the enforcement of new GDPR rules

- The Commission responded this week to a parliamentary [question](#) issued by MEP Roberta Metsola (EPP, Malta), clarifying its position on how the GDPR can protect Internet-users from hacking threats.
- The Maltese MEP asked the Commission to react to findings from a 2018 Europol report, the "Internet Organised Crime Threat Assessment – IOCTA", which, in looking at future criminal threats, found that increasingly hacked companies would rather pay a smaller ransom to a hacker for non-disclosure of a data breach than succumb to the hefty fine that could be imposed under the rules of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- According to MEP Metsola, such behaviour must be discouraged as it would not only make it difficult to tackle cybercriminals but would help finance criminal activities.
- Commissioner Mr Avramopoulos [replied](#) that the EC is aware of the IOCTA report, and explained that overall, the GDPR is contributing to making companies more resilient against cyber-attacks, and more specifically, that it would support Europol's efforts to raise awareness about the dangers of ransomware through its "No More Ransom Initiative".

#### EU: Parliament committee adopts opinion on terrorist content online proposal

- The European Parliament's Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO) adopted last week [final compromise amendments](#) on the draft opinion on preventing the dissemination of terrorist content online. The document removes the 'one-hour takedown rule' as well as the obligations for companies to take more proactive measures via automated tools.
- The leading committee on this report is the Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) committee, scheduled to vote on this proposal by late March. IMCO's opinion is not binding but it is influential.

#### **France: Macron's letter for European renewal**

- The President of France published a letter earlier this week addressing European citizens on the European elections and the dangers the Union is facing. Macron's appeal, which was translated in all official 22 EU languages and [published](#) in leading European newspapers Die Welt, the Guardian, El País and Corriere della Serra, is widely seen as his opening statement ahead of the European elections.
- President Macron described Europe not as a 'soulless market', but as a "project that should not detract from the need for borders that protect and values that unite".
- He also talked about the need of expertise on protecting elections from cyber-attacks, and rules banning all incitements to hate and violence from the Internet.