European Regional Bureau Newsletter

Internet Access

Global: EU-China Summit stresses commitment over 5G deployment

- Following the celebration of the EU-China Summit on 9 April, both parties have released a joint statement that serves as a recapitulation of the commitments made on the occasion.

- China and the EU celebrated the ongoing discussions and agreed to continue to strengthen their exchanges and cooperation under the EU-China Cyber Taskforce aimed at pursuing a secure, open, stable and accessible information and communication technology environment.

- More concretely and on the 5G front, both parties have agreed on 5G networks providing the "basic backbone for future economic and social development", and both "welcome the progress and further exchanges in the EU-China dialogue and working mechanism on 5G based on the 5G Joint Declaration of 2015, including on technological cooperation between respective business communities",

EU: The European Parliament approves the Connecting Europe Facility

- The European parliament this week signed off on the agreement on the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) between the period 2021-2027 (430 votes in favour, 146 votes against and 31 abstentions). The CEF is a key EU funding instrument designed to promote growth and jobs through targeted infrastructure investment at European level.

- The CEF for the period 2021-2027 includes a digital strand which will finance strategic digital connectivity infrastructure. This will include 5G corridors for connected and automated mobility, terabit backbone networks linking high-performance computers and their users, and gigabit connectivity for key socio-

economic drivers such as schools, hospitals, transport hubs, major public service providers and digitally intensive enterprises.

- Finnish MEP Miapetra Kumpula-Natri [welcomed](#) the agreement, stating "One of the new inequalities is access to proper Internet connection, so we must make sure that all citizens, regardless of where they live, can have affordable access to fast connections."

- The agreement needs to be now formally approved by the Council before it enters into force.

Trust

Global: Facebook accused of using user data as leverage against rivals

- According to a [special report](#) by NBC News, internal leaked Facebook documents show how the social media giant used its user's personal private data as a bargaining chip to consolidate its market position. The leaked documents, which include webchats, presentations and emails allegedly show how Facebook used the data as leverage over partner companies, rewarding favoured companies by giving them access to data of its users. In other cases, it would deny user-data access to rival companies or apps.

- The report claims for example that Amazon was given privileged access to Facebook data because it partnered with the company for the launch of its Fire smartphone and had spent money on Facebook's advertising. The report also claims that Facebook considered denying user-data access to a rival messaging app which it thought had grown too popular and was viewed as a competitor.

- Facebook has denied giving preferential treatment to developers or partners because of their spending or relationship with the company.

EU: EU countries sign off on the final steps of the Copyright reform

- European ministers [completed](#) this week the final hurdle in the controversial reform of the Copyright Directive by formally adopting the agreement reached in February with the European Parliament.

- The agreement struck in February will see large platforms like Google now have to negotiate licensing agreements with right holders (record companies, collecting societies and media companies) in order to publish their content on Youtube and Google news.

- The approval was however not unanimous: Italy, Finland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland and Sweden voted against while Belgium, Estonia, and Slovenia abstained. The German minister is also understood to have given a lengthy statement on the text during the meeting, highlighting the concerns of

- the German public on the so-called "upload filters". Germany said it would monitor whether the enforcement of the reform leads to a limitation of freedom of expression.
- President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker welcomed the approval: "With [the] agreement, we are making copyright rules fit for the digital age. Europe will now have clear rules that guarantee fair remuneration for creators, strong rights for users and responsibility for platforms".
- EU countries now have 24 months to incorporate the legislation into their national law.

EU: EU institutions raise concerns about Facebook's new advertising policy

- The European Parliament, Commission and the Council have written a joint-letter to Facebook asking it to modify its advertising policy rules ahead of the European parliamentary elections. Although the EU institutions welcome Facebook's recent efforts to claim down on the spread of fake news, they claim the new rules are impeding legitimate EU election campaigning.
- In order to limit foreign influence in the national campaigns, the social media giant now requires advertisers to register in the country where they want to purchase political advertising. In the letter sent to Facebook on April 16, the institutions explain how this decision would prevent parties and institutions from running legitimate cross-border campaigns within the EU. More concretely, according to them: "Facebook policy would prevent European political actors from using Facebook, Facebook Messenger and Instagram for their EU-wide paid communication campaigns... in their current form Facebook's envisaged rules would therefore hinder the exercise of EU electoral rights."

EU: The European Parliament adopts its position on terrorist content online

- The European Parliament has adopted this week during its Plenary Session in Strasbourg the adoption of its position on the terrorist content regulation with 308 votes in favour, 204 against and 70 abstentions.
- The proposed regulation, which was presented by the European Commission in September 2018, lays down new rules mandating among other things that platforms like Twitter or Facebook take down uploaded terrorist content within one hour of it being flagged by national competent authorities.
- Proposals from the European party of the Greens, the Socialists and the radical-left to delete the one-hour deadline for platforms to remove terrorist content were narrowly rejected.

- Daniel Dalton, the UK Conservative Member of the Parliament leading the file, warned after the vote: "any new legislation must be practical and proportionate if we are to safeguard free speech. Without a fair process, there is a risk that too much content would be removed, as business would understandably take a 'safety first' approach to defend themselves".

UK: UK data authority publishes a data code for children

- The UK data regulator has published a [draft code](#) of practice addressing how privacy and data collection should be presented in services which are used by children.
- More concretely, the code provides a guidance about how to ensure that online services safeguard children's personal data appropriately enough, and it will apply to "online products or services including apps, programs, websites, games or community environments and connected toys or devices with or without a screen that process personal data and are likely to be accessed by children in the UK".
- The code is now open for [consultation](#) and Feedback can be provided until the 31st of May.