

European Regional Bureau Newsletter



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Internet Access

EU: Wifi4EU programme spreads across the map

- The WiFiEU programme, i.e. the voucher-based programme funded by the EU to help municipalities finance free spots Wi-Fi in public spaces, is now [spreading](#) to new parts of the EU and beyond.
- The initiative now reaches municipalities from all participating countries such as Spain, France, Italy and Estonia; non-EU countries such as Norway, and European territories like France's Guadeloupe and La Réunion.
- The [budget](#) for the initiative comprised €120 million between 2018 and 2020, and supported the installation of state-of-the-art Wi-Fi equipment in over a thousand towns and villages.

Germany: Spending on AI to grow by €500 million this year

- Germany [announced](#) this week that it will spend an additional €500 million on AI in 2019, most of which will go to research and a considerable increase from the original proposal of €142 million for AI.
- In November 2018, the German national strategy on AI was published, with a pledge to spend €3bn by 2025. Around half of the extra investment (€230m) is meant to ensure scientific applications become market-ready quicker, for example by providing research and developers with better access to data.
- German Minister of Economy Peter Altmaier commented on the need for speed, saying that “when it comes to AI, we have to be faster at moving from research to application”.
- Some of the funds will also go to reskill the workforce. “It’s crucial that SMEs can use and apply AI”, said Altmaier.

Trust

Global: WEF launches new network for global technology governance

- The World Economic Forum's Centre for the Fourth Industrial Revolution Network, [launched](#) on the May 29 from its San Francisco headquarters six councils to help design how emerging technologies can be governed for the benefit of society.
- The councils cover Artificial Intelligence (AI), autonomous mobility, blockchain, drones, precision medicine and the Internet of Things (IoT), and will include top decision-makers and experts from the public and private sectors, civil society and academia, including leaders from the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences, Dana-Farber, the European Commission, Microsoft, Qualcomm, Uber and the World Bank.
- Their work will lead up to a major global summit on technology governance in April 2020.

Global: NATO Secretary General warns of cyber threats

- The NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg last week [addressed](#) an audience at the UK's National Cybersecurity Centre in London, where he highlighted how technologies are fundamentally changing the nature of warfare.
- He noted that NATO is adapting by strengthening its capabilities and increasing its resources.
- In his view: "For deterrence to have full effect, potential attackers must know that we are not limited to respond in cyberspace when we are attacked in cyber space. We can and will use the full range of capabilities at our disposal"
- Bolstering cyber defences and resilience will be a top priority at the NATO Summit of Allied Heads of State and Government to be held in London in December 2019.

EU: Finland establishes data and cybersecurity amongst its priorities

- Finland's government, which will take over the rotating Presidency of the Council of the EU on July 1st, is expected to place at the heart of its legislative strategy measures to boost the data economy and cybersecurity.
- A [document](#) released by the Council this week states that: "We [the Finnish government] wish to turn the discussion towards trusted and human-centric data economy within Europe, respecting the rights and privacy of individuals".
- The incoming Finnish Presidency of the EU is expected to continue work on the ePrivacy proposal and the European Cybersecurity Competence Centre Regulation as well as establish other priorities such as the promotion of access and re-use of data.

EU: Commission publishes guidelines on the free flow of non-personal data

- Earlier this week and as part of the Digital Single Market strategy, the European Commission published new [guidance](#) on how EU data protection rules interact with the free flow non-personal data.
- The new [Regulation](#) allows data to be stored and processed everywhere in the EU without unjustified restrictions with the aim of helping SMEs and users.

- The Regulation also provides for a stable legal business environment on data processing, preventing EU Member States from approving laws that unjustifiably force data to be held inside national territory.
- The [guidance](#) addresses concepts such as personal and non-personal data, and their combination in so-called ‘mixed datasets’, the principles of free movement of data and the prohibition of data localisation requirements.
- Vice-President for the Digital Single Market Andrus Ansip stated that “By removing forced data localisation restrictions, we give more people and businesses the chance to make the most out of data and its opportunities”.

EU: Citizens have the right to rectification of inaccurate personal data, says European Commission

- Earlier this year an Irish MEP, Liadh Ní Riada from the GUE/NGL Group, submitted a parliamentary [question](#) to the European Commission on whether citizens should have the right to request the imminent rectification of personal data under GDPR.
- The question presented the case of an Irish citizen that had repeatedly asked the Irish authority to rectify a misspelling of his name in medical documents.
- In her answer, European Commissioner for Justice Vera Jourová confirmed that citizens should be able to immediately demand such a rectification, [stating](#) “the data subject has the right to obtain from the controller without undue delay the rectification of inaccurate personal data”.
- She added that the enforcement of the data protection legislation falls under the competence of the national data authority, and the individual has the right to initiate a proceeding against the authority before the national court if he or she is not satisfied.

EU: Ministers adopt mandate for WTO e-commerce talks

- The Council [adopted](#) this week an updated mandate for starting talks with members of the WTO to set up global rules for e-commerce.
- The mandate is an updated version of the Doha Development Agenda and now includes the EU’s position on e-commerce, allowing the European Commission to start plurilateral negotiations.
- The new rules should aim at “encouraging global e-commerce, facilitating the operations of business, in particular SMEs, strengthening consumers’ trust in the online environment and creating new opportunities to promote inclusive and sustainable growth and development”.
- Earlier this month, China circulated a [proposal](#) on the reform of the WTO for the organisation to play a bigger role in global economic governance, including on Internet sovereignty, data security and privacy protection.
- According to China, new rules for WTO should “respect members’ right to regulate and accommodate specific concerns of developing members” and should also “strike the balance among technological advantages, business development and such legitimate public policy objectives as Internet sovereignty, data security and privacy protection”.

- China also called on the development of international rules that harmonise the recognition of electronic signatures and online consumer protection.