

# European Regional Bureau Newsletter



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## Internet Access

### EU: European Commission President-elect lays out her digital priorities

- Earlier this week President-elect of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen released a [vision paper](#) in which she outlined her priorities for the next five years.
- In the digital field, she committed to develop joint standards for European 5G networks; achieving technological sovereignty by investing in blockchain, High Performance Computing, algorithms and tools to allow data sharing and data usage.
- Other priorities included driving a full digitalisation of the Commission; presenting a new Digital Services Act to upgrade Europe's liability and safety rules for digital platforms, mandatory transparency requirements on AI and creating a Digital Education Action Plan.

### EU: Telecoms regulator seeks views on 5G regulation

- The EU telecoms regulator, BEREC, this week [published](#) a consultation seeking inputs on the impact 5G has on regulation, and the role of regulation in enabling the 5G ecosystem. The regulator is keen to ensure that the various regulations which apply to 5G are not a barrier to innovative services.
- BEREC is particularly [looking at](#) feedback on 5G impact in issues such as privacy, competition at retail level for operators and services, quality of services and consumer protection. The deadline to respond is 30<sup>th</sup> August.
- From the consultation BEREC will publish a report later this year that will anticipate changes to regulations "that may be required to keep pace with innovation" and identify potential issues to be addressed by BEREC or other competent authorities.

### EU: Paving the way 5G, EU official lays thoughts

- The EU's top civil servant on digital issues, Director General Roberto Viola published earlier this week a [blog post](#) on 5G deployment strategy and benefits.
- In his view, the benefits of 5G networks are “virtually limitless”, going beyond “simply smartphones” and enabling technologies such as AI & IoT. According to Viola, 5G deployment will create jobs, drive sustainable growth and help solve many key societal challenges from improving road safety to lowering carbon emissions.
- Viola argues that the right strategy is needed, noting that while the EU can do a lot to encourage the development of 5G infrastructure, it cannot do it alone. He estimates that EU private sector investments in 5G will amount to €60-100bn annually in the coming five years.

#### EU: Is the EU strategically autonomous?

- The European Commission's in-house thinktank, the EPSCR, released this week a [paper](#) on the EU's strategic autonomy in the digital age. It notes that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, in order to influence economic, societal and political outcomes it is increasingly vital to control digital technologies.
- The paper argues that the EU risks falling behind in the digital race and identifies 5G technology, AI and quantum computers as key enablers of digital autonomy which are going to play an “increasingly central role in both economic and military developments”.
- It concludes that 2019 will be a crucial year for the EU to prepare for the challenges ahead. In this regard, ‘Made in EU’ digital technologies need to be at the forefront of this important endeavour.

## Trust

#### Global: Post-Brexit Data Protection standards

- The EU Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS) this week released an [overview](#) of the potential scenarios on post-Brexit data protection.
- In the scenario of the UK leaving with a deal and a transition period on October 31<sup>st</sup>, the GDPR and other EU legislation that protects personal data would apply until 2020 with the possibility of another two years extension beyond this date.
- A no-deal scenario would however have significant repercussions as EU data protection law would cease to apply in the UK. Personal data transfers to the UK would then be subject to specific conditions from 1 November 2019, which would include a variety of mechanisms to transfer data including contractual causes.

#### Global: Microsoft warns users of foreign nation targeting

- Microsoft [announced](#) earlier this week that it had notified around 10,000 customers during 2018 of targeting by nation-state attacks from Iran, North Korea and Russia, including attacks against political parties.
- Of those attacks, 84% focused on Microsoft's business customers and 16% on personal customer email accounts. Out of the 10,000 attacks, 781 were targeted at political campaigns, parties or NGOs.

- According to Tom Burt, Head of Microsoft's Customer Security and Trust team, "While many of these attacks are unrelated to the democratic process, this data demonstrates the significant extent to which nation-states continue to rely on cyberattacks as a tool to gain intelligence".

#### EU: Facebook's cryptocurrency Libra faces calls for regulation

- Facebook's new cryptocurrency project, Libra, continued to face strong [calls for regulation](#) in the EU this week.
- French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire stated during the G7 Finance Ministers meeting this week that it needs to be regulated and be subject to same anti-money laundering standards as traditional money.
- The criticism builds upon recent remarks made by other EU regulators such as the Governor of the Bank of England, Mark Carney. Carney [stated](#) recently that Facebook will need to meet "the highest regulatory standards" in order to roll out its virtual currency next year.

#### EU: Commission formally opens investigation into Amazon's use of seller data

- The European Commission formally [opened](#) this week an anti-trust investigation to assess whether Amazon's use of sensitive data from independent retailers is in breach of EU competition rules.
- The Commission will look specifically at the standard agreements between Amazon and marketplace sellers, which allow Amazon's retail business to analyse and use third party seller data to see whether and how its use affects competition.
- Commissioner for Competition Margrethe Vestager stated: "E-commerce has boosted retail competition and brought more choice [...] We need to ensure that large online platforms don't eliminate these benefits through anti-competitive behaviour".

#### EU: Majority of Member States complete risk assessment of their 5G networks

- Following the Commission's [recommendations](#) on a shared approach to security of the 5G networks, 24 Member States have now conducted their [domestic assessments](#). The national assessments will serve as the basis for the overall EU-wide risk study expected for the 1<sup>st</sup> October.
- The national assessments include a listing of the main threats affecting 5G networks, the degree of sensitivity of 5G network components and functions, and an assessment of the types of vulnerabilities.
- Digital Commissioner Mariya Gabriel welcomed the efforts and added that the EU needs "all key players, big and small, to accelerate their efforts and join [the EU] in building a common framework aimed at ensuring consistently high levels of security".

#### EU: Countries to evaluate GDPR by the end of the year

- The Finnish Presidency released this week a [document](#) laying down the basis for the Member States' evaluation of the General Data Protection Regulation with

the aim of serving as the basis of the overall study the European Commission must conduct by May 2020.

- According to the document, EU Member States are asked to give feedback on transfer of personal data to third countries; national protection authorities' cooperation mechanisms; and information to assess the coherent application of GDPR across the EU.
- Member States are expected to give such feedback in views of the Council's meeting expected on September 3.

#### **France: Parliament approves the 'Huawei law'**

- The French Parliament has [approved](#) what has been known as the 'Huawei law', giving the government the chance to impede operators to work with foreign equipment makers like Huawei.
- The new law will oblige operators to report to the Prime Minister's (PM) office whenever they bring in foreign equipment, giving the PM the power to block such decisions if they represents a serious risk to national security.
- President Macron argued earlier this year that "France and Europe are pragmatic and realistic" about the issue, adding that they would find an equilibrium between access to technology and preserving national security.