

European Regional Bureau Newsletter



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Internet Access

EU: Brexit consequences on .eu domain

- In the context of the preparations for the UK's withdrawal from the EU, the European Commission has released a [document](#) outlining Brexit's repercussions over the use of the .eu domain.
- Following the expected Brexit date of October 31, companies established in the UK will no longer be eligible to use the domain, nor will they be allowed to renew their license on the domain register.

UK: New Prime Minister pledges massive broadband investments, despite Huawei trouble

- Britain's new Prime Minister Boris Johnson has pledged a massive investment into upgrading the country's fibre optic broadband network, one that could cost up to £30bn.
- The pledge comes amid tense conversations around which operators will provide the equipment for the British 5G rollout and the extent to which Chinese state-backed companies like Huawei should be given access.
- Views from Huawei and the UK government remain contradictory. Huawei's CEO Ren Zhengfei [told](#) press earlier this week that it was "very likely Huawei products will be deployed in the UK's core networks in the future".
- However, former Digital Secretary Jeremy Wright, [told](#) parliament last week that the government was "not yet in a position to decide what involvement Huawei should have in the provision of the UK's 5G network".

Trust

Global: Privacy International warn of 5G risks in a hyperconnected world

- The NGO Privacy International [released](#) a position paper on July 23 outlining the actions policy-makers should take to curb the risks of next generation networks.

- While 5G networks will enable higher download and upload rates, lower latency, and more connection density, the underlying physical infrastructure of the Internet will not change substantially. Governments or companies will still be able to use “exploitative techniques” like communications surveillance or data retention.
- On the security side, Privacy International acknowledge that upgrading the standards of 5G protocols will bring some improvements that will prevent the abuse of signalling protocols (needed for roaming), but old vulnerabilities will remain due to the coexistence with other protocols like 4G, 3G or 2G.
- To address these issues, Privacy International recommend corporations conduct privacy assessments and minimise the data they collect and retain, giving users information and control over how their devices work.

EU: Sweeping new rules to curb illegal online content revealed

- The Financial Times has [obtained](#) a leaked memo from the European Commission outlining its plans for a Digital Services Act, legislation that aims to increase the liability of platforms for the publication of online content and expected to be published at the end of 2020.
- The proposed Digital Services Act comes at a time when a flurry of other EU countries are legislating on measures to curb illegal online content, including in Germany (NetzDG), France (Avia law), and UK (the Online Harms Whitepaper).

EU: Commission launches a call for proposals on data on the EU’s start-up landscape

- The European Commission announced earlier this week the launch of a [tender](#) for the provision of a service that studies the EU’s start-up and hub landscape and assess its overall contribution to the EU economy.
- The two main expected results are to strengthen the image of European ICT start-ups and scale-ups while contributing to more effective evidence-based policy-making. The deadline for applications is 23 September 2019.

EU: Beware of hurting SMEs with GDPR, say European retailers

- Following the European Commission’s publication of its status [report](#) on the first year of GDPR implementation, the European association for retail and wholesale EuroCommerce has expressed its views on the topic.
- EuroCommerce’s Christian Verschuere [believed](#) that more efforts are needed to reduce regulatory burdens on companies, “particularly on the 4 million SMEs in our sector”.
- The association welcomes the Commission’s further cooperation with the private sector, but expects further clarifications on how companies can simplify their GDPR-compliance processes.
- The association of retailers also highlights potential contradictions and overlaps between the GDPR and the draft of the e-Privacy regulation, asking legislators to “ensure that the e-Privacy Regulation and GDPR are aligned and avoid obligations contradicting each other”.

EU: NGOs push Commission to assess data retention

- Around 30 digital rights organisations, including EDRI and La Quadrature du Net, sent a [letter](#) to the Commission's president-elect Ursula von der Leyen and first vice-president Frans Timmermans to ask for "an independent, scientific study on the necessity and proportionality of existing and potential legislative measures around data retention."
- They also call on the EU executive to launch infringement procedures against countries enforcing data protection laws that are not compliant with the Court's rulings.
- The groups argue that "blanket data retention is an invasive surveillance measure of the entire population".

EU: 27 Member States have already submitted their 5G networks risk assessment

- Speaking to the European Parliament's Civil Liberties Committee (LIBE), Commissioner for the Security Union Julian King [announced](#) this week that 27 out of 28 EU capitals had already submitted their national 5G network risk assessment.
- In an accompanying [statement](#), the Commissioner said he was pleased to see that most Member States had submitted their risk assessments and that this work should continue: "We need all key players, big and small, to accelerate their efforts and join us in building a common framework aimed at ensuring consistently high levels of security".

EU: Hearing of new Cybersecurity Chief postponed

- Juhan Lepasaar, former Head of Cabinet to Andrus Ansip who served as Vice President of the Commission for the Digital Single Market, was scheduled to be grilled by Members of the European Parliament this week in the Industry, Research and Energy committee (ITRE) ahead of his appointment.
- But Lepasaar did not take the floor, agreeing instead with ITRE's committee chair Adina-loana Vălean to push back the hearing to September 2-3.

France: Government signals U-Turn on the need for overhaul of platform rules

- Recent statements by French Digital Minister Cédric O indicates that the French government may be cooling on the idea of wide-reaching platform liability regulation.
- Speaking to parliamentarians during a session this week, the minister expressed his reserves around developing a "third status" for platforms, telling the French Senate that this would be unacceptable to Nordic countries.
- The "third status" idea was floated by France, applying to companies like Google, Facebook and Twitter, to create a new status for companies that are not publishers, who are legally responsible for content, but not mere hosting providers.

- Speaking about the proposed Digital Services Act, O said: “We saw [the DSA] in Commission President-elect Ursula von der Leyen’s working program. The revision of the e-commerce directive is a totem for her,” he said. “I wonder about tactics, it’s a very long battle”.

France: New copyright law for press publishers adopted

- The National Assembly voted on Tuesday to transpose the copyright directive’s Article 15 imposing a neighbouring right for press publishers, making France the first EU country to adapt national legislation to the controversial reform.
- Hyperlinks and “very short extracts” of press articles are not covered by the new right, which will last two years.
- Law-makers struggled to define what exactly constituted “very short extracts”, with the final text saying they are simply excluded from the neighbouring right as long as they cannot be substituted for the press article itself.