

# European Regional Bureau Newsletter



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## Internet Access

### Global: World Economic Forum to lead G20 smart cities alliance

- The World Economic Forum (WEF) has been [selected](#) to coordinate a new alliance of G20 cities to establish universal norms and guidelines for the implementation of smart city technology.
- The Global Smart Cities Alliance, including New York City, Tokyo, and Barcelona, will establish how technology is used in public places, promoting core principles around transparency, privacy and security.
- The Forum's work will be led by its Internet of Things, Robotics and Smart Cities [team](#), with participation from city leaders of the G20 countries and business partners that include Eisai, Hitachi, NEC and Salesforce.

### EU: Broadband deployment in the Balkans – Commission spotlights its latest work

- The European Commission (EC) has highlighted its recent work on broadband deployment in the Western Balkans with a [brochure](#) overviewing some recent projects in the region.
- The funding, which comes out of the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) for 2014-2020, ranges from €1.5bn for Serbia to €237m for Bosnia & Herzegovina, with funding also awarded to North Macedonia (€664m), Albania (€649m), Kosovo (€645m), Montenegro (€270m).
- In total, €30m was made available for broadband investments between 2018-2020 with projects focused on “white areas”, rural areas, and helping local government, educational or health institutions modernise their systems.
- One project in Albania involves a €0.5m EU grant allocated by the EC to carry out a feasibility study for efficient investments into broadband infrastructure, aiming to act as a “first step” towards increasing the availability of next generation broadband access in the country.

### EU: Seven countries launch plan to create Europe's Quantum Internet

- Earlier this month, seven EU countries [agreed](#) to work together to explore how to make available quantum communication infrastructure in Europe, boosting European capabilities in quantum technologies, cybersecurity and industrial competitiveness.
- The agreement to deploy a quantum communication infrastructure (QCI) within the next ten years would enable information and data to be transmitted and stored ultra-securely.
- The plan would be to integrate quantum technologies and systems into conventional communication infrastructures, entailing two elements: an earth-based component making use of existing fibre communication networks capable of linking strategic sites at national and cross-border level, and a space-based component to cover long distances across the EU and other continents.
- The signatory countries, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands and Spain, hope to turn this quantum network into the backbone of Europe's Quantum Internet, which would eventually connect all quantum computers, simulators and sensors via quantum networks that securely distribute information across Europe.

#### EU: Deploying 5G in Europe's medieval towns

- In a recent [article](#) for the EU's research & innovation magazine, the EC shed light onto some of its latest 5G deployment activities in rural regions and small towns.
- One example is 5GCity, a project aiming to help local governments own and operate 5G infrastructure,.
- The project is helping develop core aspects of 5G technology like small cells (the base stations needed to create 5G's dense cell infrastructure) and network slicing (the technique of segmenting the network into several slices to enable different types of usage, like smartphones needing high data speeds, or IoT sensors that would not need high data speeds but low energy usage).

## Trust

#### Global: Facebook plans to finalise content moderation board by August 2019

- The company announced on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> June, that it has finished gathering feedback on an independent board to oversee content moderation decisions.
- Facebook released a 44-page [report](#) outlining how board members will be selected and which content moderation disputes they will hear.
- One point of agreement from the feedback given by experts in technology, human rights and free speech, was that Facebook leadership should not appoint the board and that members should bring a diverse range of views.
- There was also "strong consensus" that the board's decisions should shape Facebook's content moderation policies going forward.
- The report is the result of workshops, roundtables and personal discussions with over 900 people from 88 countries and collected 1,200 comments on the oversight board.

### EU: Chancellor Merkel calls for overarching EU regulation on Artificial Intelligence

- Speaking at the G20 meeting of leaders in Osaka, the German Chancellor has repeated [comments](#) on how she wanted the European Commission to regulate artificial intelligence with rules similar to Europe's sweeping set of privacy rules.
- She said that "in the EU, we're still facing the task to come up with the details [of how to regulate AI] beyond [non-binding] principles...it will be the job of the next Commission to deliver something so that we have regulation similar to the General Data Protection Regulation that makes it clear that artificial intelligence serves humanity."

### EU: Talks resume on e-Privacy

- The incoming Finnish presidency of the Council of the EU has sent a [note](#) to national delegations on the ePrivacy regulation about the way forward, re-starting talks on the issue between EU Member States.
- The countries are asked to identify the "most essential" aspects of the draft legislation and the "most problematic" areas deserving to be deleted.
- The proposed regulation "concerning the respect for private life and the protection of personal data in electronic communications" also known as the ePrivacy regulation is expected to be landmark piece of privacy legislation once adopted, creating more regulatory oversight over online communications and messaging services like WhatsApp or Facebook messenger.
- The Council's telecom working group will meet on July 4 to pursue talks.

### EU: Yandex hacked by Western intelligence sources

- According to a [report](#) by Reuters, hackers working for Western intelligence agencies broke into Russian Internet search engine Yandex in late 2018, deploying a rare type of malware in an attempt to spy on user accounts.
- The malware, called Regin, is known, according to four people reporting the news to Reuters, to be used by the "Five Eyes" intelligence-sharing alliance of the United States, Britain, Australia, New Zealand and Canada.
- The article states that western cyberattacks against Russia are "seldom acknowledged" or spoken about in public. The breach is reported to have taken place between October and November 2018.

### EU: Finland ups the ante on cybersecurity preparations

- The Finnish government, which takes over the six-month rotating presidency of the Council of the EU on July 1, aims to introduce cybersecurity exercises to some of the informal ministerial meetings of foreign and interior ministers to increase awareness of the risks faced by Europe.
- According to Foreign Minister Pekka Haavisto, who spoke to reporters in Helsinki earlier this week, there is a need "to better equip the EU against hybrid threats."

- Improving the EU's cybersecurity resilience is one of the [priorities](#) of the incoming Finnish presidency, which warns neighbouring countries of the risks tied to Russian disinformation.

#### **France: Consumer groups launch new privacy probe into Google**

- French consumer protection group UFC-Que Choisir [launched](#) on Wednesday a group action against Google over alleged violations of the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- The case, filed in front of the Paris high court is backed by 200 consumers, and argues that Google does not properly obtain the users' consent to process their geolocation data.
- The group calls on Google to stop processing personal data obtained "illegally" and to collect "real consent" from users.

#### **UK: Facebook faces regulatory hurdles on its new digital currency**

- Britain's Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) is in close contact with Facebook over its Libra digital currency plans, with Andrew Bailey, its chief executive, stressing that Facebook can't "walk through authorisation".
- The FCA is working with the Treasury and the Bank of England on the matter, engaging with the Libra Association in Switzerland at domestic level in the UK and internationally.
- For Andrew Bailey, the Facebook announcement is "extremely significant" and raises "very big issues for the public policy world".