

European Regional Bureau Newsletter



28 September 2019 – 04 October 2019

<https://www.Internetsociety.org/regions/europe/>

Frédéric Donck (ERB)

Internet Access

European Community Networks Summit: ISOC is organising an international conference on community networks

- The Internet Society is partnering with the Georgian Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development in organising a conference called “Community networks: connecting the next billion” on November 14-15 in Tbilisi, Georgia.
- The Conference will gather participants from all over Europe who will discuss issues related to community networks – a low-cost, community-driven way to bring Internet connections to hard-to-reach areas.
- With half the world’s population remaining unconnected, the conference’s discussion on community networks could provide a new model on improving the access of internet to villages and remote areas.
- For more information, please visit <https://bit.ly/2ASoluZ>

EU: Commission publishes a factsheet on 5G

- The European Commission [released](#) a factsheet on Friday, explaining the benefits and opportunities that 5G will provide to Europeans.
- 5G is expected to create jobs and improve sustainable development, with a profound impact on key industry sectors such as health, energy, and mobility.
- The factsheet also touches upon global competition, claiming that “European operators are on equal track with China and the United States in their preparations for the commercial launch of 5G this year.”

EU: Liberty Global to accelerate broadband rollouts across Europe

- Telecommunications giant Liberty Global [published](#) a press release on Monday according to which the company will expand its Gigabit broadband speeds coverage to Switzerland, Belgium, and the UK.

- The statement also reveals that additional GigaCities will be launched by the end of 2019 and throughout 2020, providing future users with access to 1 Gigabit broadband speeds.
- It is further mentioned that “the widespread availability of Gigabit speeds are estimated to deliver between €250-660 billion of economic value per year in Europe by 2025.”

UK: Great Britain to boost investments in broadband coverage

- British Finance Minister Sajid Javid [announced](#) on Monday that he will introduce a framework on state-funded investments in infrastructure.
- As part of the framework, he will dedicate 5 billion GBP to the improvement of fast broadband access in rural and remotes area of the country.
- In a [press release](#) reviewing his speech, Javid states that he is "setting out plans to invest £5bn to support the rollout of full-fibre, 5G and other gigabit-capable networks to the hardest-to-reach 20% of the country.”

Trust

Global: Global cost of data breaches has climbed significantly

- A report by Kaspersky, a multinational cybersecurity and anti-virus provider, [indicates](#) that the average cost of enterprise data breaches has increased from EUR 1.1 million to EUR 1.3 million since last year.
- The worrying statistic has spurred companies to invest heavily in cybersecurity measures: an average of EUR 17.3 million this year compared to EUR 8.1 million in 2018.
- For their research, the company has interviewed about 5,000 people in 23 countries around the world.

Global: Facebook defends encryption plans despite growing concerns

- Several countries, including the US, the UK, and Australia, have called on Facebook to halt its encryption plans, as they could restrain the fight against terrorism and child exploitation.
- Despite the unease, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg [announced](#) this week that he would defend the company’s decision to encrypt its messages.
- In his defence, Zuckerberg revealed that he was aware of child exploitation risks in advance of the plan but admitted that encryption might in fact hinder the battle against terrorism and child molestation.

Global: Social media have failed to provide advertisement transparency

- On Thursday, Privacy International – a UK-based charity that protects users’ right to privacy across the world – [published](#) an analysis which states that social media companies have failed to provide political ad transparency to users.

- The analysis states that social media companies have used different approaches in different countries, and they have acted based on the level of pressure they have felt from governments and citizens.
- Additionally, it is underscored that most users around the globe “lack meaningful insight into how ads are being targeted through these platforms.”

EU: Highest EU Court ruled that Facebook can be forced to remove illegal content

- On Thursday, the European Court of Justice [ruled](#) that US tech giant Facebook can be ordered to remove illegal content globally – should the content be considered to be illegal in one country.
- The Court indicated that according to EU law, local judges can enforce Facebook to remove such content, and these orders could be applied globally so long as EU Member States comply to international law.
- Facebook criticised the Court’s ruling, claiming that it would have “a chilling effect on freedom of expression.”

EU: Commissioner for innovation maintains the EU has taken all measures to protect itself from cyber threats

- On Monday, then Commissioner-designate for innovation Mariya Gabriel [responded](#) to a question by the European Parliament on the risks associated with Huawei’s involvement in the deployment of EU 5G networks.
- In her response, Gabriel pointed out that “The Commission has implemented all the required security measures to protect itself and its staff from any cybersecurity risks.”
- Gabriel also mentioned that despite all the EU security measures, it is Member States’ responsibility to implement specific actions on 5G deployment.

EU: Finnish President comments on Huawei-related security risks

- On Wednesday, Finnish President Sauli Niinistö [held](#) a joint press-conference with US President Donald Trump which touched upon national security.
- On whether EU Member States installing Huawei equipment would face national security risks, Mr. Niinistö stated that currently the EU “is making a risk assessment” based on which it will decide what actions will be taken next.
- In the meantime, EU Security Commissioner Julian King [announced](#) that the risk assessment will be performed “without having to cite a particular country or a particular company.”

France: Paris to launch a nationwide facial recognition plan

- France is about to become the first EU country to use facial recognition technology for securing its citizens’ digital identity.

- In an attempt to make the state more efficient, the French Government has plans [to deploy](#) an ID programme, called Alicem, next month, which is in advance of the official Christmas target.
- Critics have stated that the move is initiated without citizens' consent, indicating that there is "little interest in the importance of consent and choice."

France: Orange and Arcep to reach an agreement

- Tensions between French telecoms regulator Arcep and telecom giant Orange seem to have cooled down.
- Orange has decided [to withdraw](#) its complaint about Arcep's sanctioning powers and behavior, which was followed by a meeting between Orange CEO Stéphane Richard and Arcep President Sébastien Soriano.
- Soriano even announced that Arcep has heard Orange's concerns and "will be more careful in the future" about how the regulator communicates with telecoms.