

ISOC EUROPEAN REGIONAL BUREAU - EU issues overview
14 – 21 December 2012

ITU/WCIT

EuroISPA deplores failure of the WCIT 2012

- In a [statement](#) published on its website, EuroISPA expressed regrets with the outcome of the World Conference on International Telecommunications (WCIT), while highlighting its support to the position held by the EU Member States, as they refused to agree on expanding the **scope for ITRs**.
- The attempts by numerous states to expand the ITRs were underlined as potentially harmful to growth and to standards of human rights, ultimately leading to limitations of Internet freedom. Instead of including the Internet into the ITRs, EuroISPA stressed its support of the existing **multi-stakeholder framework** of Internet governance.
- 'This was a missed opportunity to extend the benefits of competitive and liberalised markets, but the blame lies with those non-European governments that insisted on creating new rights for governments instead of focusing on what's good for end users,' stated Malcolm Hutter, President of EuroISPA.

EDRi underlines the need for Internet Policy discussions

- [EDRi](#) published an article reviewing the outcome of the WCIT and the possible repercussions it would have on the future of Internet governance.
- Even though the conference has been hailed as successful by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), 55 Member states have not signed the reviewed treaty, as questions on whether the ITRs were going to cover the Internet regulation raised **concerns on Internet freedom**.
- The introduction of the so called 'right of Member States to access international telecommunications services' was perceived by the Western states as **an attempt to legitimize censorship**.
- Moreover, it was argued that this provision could result in the **content and service providers to be forced to provide** services to particular organisations and this regardless their will.
- EDRi argued that the changed ITRs are currently unlikely to make any practical difference to the current functioning of the Internet, but, 'at the same time, the split in the number of countries who signed the agreement and those who didn't clearly shows widely different views about the future of the Internet and the provision of telecommunication services.'
- For EDRi, the conference underlined the existing need for the stakeholders to recognise and address the issues linked to Internet regulation.
- 'As the ITU seeks to assert its relevance in Internet policy discussions, particularly around cybercrime, Internet advocates will have to continue pushing for greater access and transparency of this organization in line with the multi-stakeholder model of Internet Governance,' could we read in the statement.

Open Internet

Blocking Google Sites in Turkey breaches Human Rights

- On 18 December, the European Court of Human Rights [ruled](#) that the Turkish Court decision to block the entire Google sites constitutes a **breach to the European Convention of Human Rights** (Freedom of Expression)
- The access restriction was judged unlawful as no framework was in place to regulate the scope of the restriction and to offer judicial review to prevent possible abuse.
- The ruling stated that 'there was no indication that the Turkish Criminal Court had made any attempt to weigh up the various interests at stake, in particular by assessing whether it had been necessary to block all access to Google Sites.'

UK Government proposes default filter for child safety online

- The UK Government presented its intention to introduce a proposal for child safety online which would set a **default web filter** for houses with children.
- Commenting on the proposal, Prime Minister Cameron [stated](#) that 'when people switch on a new computer, they will be asked if there are children in the house – and if they answer yes, they will be **automatically prompted to tailor internet filters** (...)Let me reiterate the key points: with our new system, every parent will be prompted to protect their child online. If they don't make choices, protection will be automatically on. No other Government has taken such radical steps before.'
- The filter would offer options to either **block certain kind of content**, individual sites or to restrict access during specific periods of the day.
- Prime Minister Cameron also announced that MP Claire Perry, leader of the campaign for broader, automatic block on adult material for all internet users, will be appointed as his adviser on reversing the commercialisation and sexualisation of childhood.
- The default filter proposal follows up an [inquiry](#) carried out by MP Claire Perry in April.
- The original inquiry [recommended](#) the following:
 - 'Government initiate a formal review of an Opt-In filter to access adult material on the Internet;
 - The Government should press for accelerated implementation plans for "Active Choice"; the content filtering system proposed for new internet customers by the largest ISPs;
 - Within 12 months, ISPs should roll out "single account" network filters that provide one click filtering for all devices connected to the same internet account;
 - A single regulator should take lead responsibility on internet safety;
 - Public Wi-Fi networks should have a default adult-content bar;
 - Government and industry should draw up new guidelines to publicise existing safety settings on computers and internet-enabled devices;
 - ISPs should provide more support and signposting for internet safety education.'

Cybersecurity

- ENISA published a [report](#) on key findings and recommendations of the second pan-European Cyber Exercise which took place on 4 October 2012 with more 500 cybersecurity professionals participating.
- The Cyber Europe 2012 exercise was recognised as a milestone in the EU's effort to **strengthen cooperation in cybersecurity** manners. The fact that the **ISPs** took active part in the exercise was highlighted in the report as having a **high added value**.

- The report concluded that the exercise was the occasion to reinforce the European cyber-incident management community and called for organisation of a similar initiative in the future.

Internet Access

Internet access and usage in the European Union

- EUROSTAT has published a [press release](#) on **internet access and use** in the European Union Member States for the year 2012.
- The figures provided confirmed that a growing number of European households have access to Internet. In 2006, fewer than 50% of households had access to Internet, while in 2012 this figure is above 75%. Even greater increase was recorded for broadband connection (72% in 2012, compared to 30% in 2006).
- The report underlined that considerable differences exist between the Member States. For example in Denmark, over 90% of the population have Internet access, while in Bulgaria and Romania this number is just over 50%.
- The statistics also provided numbers on Internet usage. 'While sending and receiving e-mails as well as finding information about goods or services remained **the most common online activities** (89% and 83% respectively of those who had used the internet within the last three months) in the EU27 in 2012, other activities are also widespread among EU27 internet users: 61% read online news, 54% used internet banking services, 52% posted messages to social media and 50% used services related to travel. In 2012, creating websites or blogs was much less common, even if 9% of internet users already undertook this activity.'

Commission reveals digital priorities for 2013-2014

- In a press release published on 18 December, the European Commission revealed the new [priorities for Digital Agenda](#) for 2013-2014. The priority document entitled [The Digital Agenda for Europe - Driving European growth digitally](#) stressed that the EU better should position itself in order to benefit from digital market developments, so as not to lose global competitiveness, hamper its economic growth and societal development.
- By adopting **seven new priorities**, the European Union wanted to reflect the importance of digital economy, which potential is currently held back by **fragmented regulation** fragmentation, and emphasize the **policy areas** identified by its policy review of the Digital Agenda.
- The European Commission estimated that full implementation of the agenda would increase EU's GDP by 5% over the next eight years. Also, the European Commission warned that 'in terms of jobs, up to one million digital jobs risk going unfilled by 2015 without pan-European action while **1.2 million jobs could be created** through infrastructure construction. This would rise to 3.8 million new jobs throughout the economy in the long term.'
- The new priority areas set for 2013-2014 are the following:
 1. Creation of a **new and stable broadband regulatory environment** which will be supported in 2013 by a package of ten actions including 'Recommendations on stronger non-discriminatory network access and new costing methodology for wholesale access to broadband networks, net neutrality, universal service and mechanisms for reducing the civil engineering costs of broadband roll-out.'
 2. The [Connecting Europe Facility](#) will be used to support **fast-track roll out of digital services** in eIDs and eSignatures, business mobility, eJustice, eProcurement and eGovernment.

3. The Commission wants to launch a **Grand Coalition on Digital Skills and Jobs** to coordinate public and private sector actions in order to increase 'IT training placements, create more direct education-business links, agree standard job profiles and promote skill certification to help job mobility. The Commission will also deliver an action plan to support web entrepreneurs and make Europe more "start-up friendly."
4. The EU will strengthen the **cybersecurity provisions** by introducing a strategy a Directive to 'establish a common minimum level of preparedness at national level, including an online platform to prevent and counter cross-border cyber incidents, and incident reporting requirements. This will stimulate a larger European market for security and privacy-by-design products.'
5. An **updated copyright framework** will support the completion of the Digital Single Market. In 2013, the EC will launch a structured stakeholder dialogue. A decision whether to introduce a new legislative proposal will be taken in 2014.
6. The Commission will **accelerate cloud computing** take off by launching pilot actions within the European Cloud Partnership to put an end to the current regulatory fragmentation.
7. Finally, the Commission will launch a new **electronics industrial strategy** for micro and nano-electronics.