

ISOC European Regional Bureau Newsletter

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Net neutrality

EU: Parliament delays vote on the proposed Telecom package

- The scheduled **vote** by the **European Parliament's Industry Committee (ITRE)** on the proposed **telecom package has been postponed**. It was reported that the delay is due to procedural reasons, namely translation of amendments.
- Considering that the vote has been **rescheduled for 17 and 18 March**, some analysts warned that this postponement could jeopardize an agreement on the text before the elections in May. Nevertheless, **Commissioner Kroes voiced her optimism** stating the delay would not disrupt the progress of work.

Comment: A delayed plenary agreement could result in large modifications of the proposal considering that the upcoming European Parliament elections are expected to change the balance of power in the chamber.

EU: Quarter of Europeans feel their Internet access is being throttled

- The **European Commission** has released the **results** of an **EU-wide survey on consumers' perception** of fixed and mobile Internet speeds and **blocking of access to online content and applications**. The survey was based on 28.000 interviews to measure how Europeans access and use the main electronic communications services.
- The results show that **24% of European Internet users say they are prevented by their providers from watching videos, listening to music or using other applications of their choice**. The blocking appears to be a common practice as 41% of users stated they experience problems watching a video on a mobile device and 37% on a fixed Internet connection at home, due to speed limitations or blocking of content.
- Digital Agenda Commissioner Kroes stated that Internet subscription should grant the users access to all content with the speed they paid for. The Commission underlined that the survey findings reinforce the evidence **reported** previously by Berec (Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications)

Data protection

EU: Overhaul of the data protection framework on the agenda of next week's Council meeting

- During the coming **meeting** of the **EU Council** (3-4 March), the ministers of justice will discuss the proposed overhaul of the EU data protection framework. They should consider the possibility of **relaxing rules for personal data that have been pseudonymised** or have no reference to an individual identity. They will also discuss the possibility for **European lawmakers to block data transfers to countries that practice unacceptable surveillance activities**, should there be important reasons of public interest, internal sources reported.
- Expanding the scope of the mechanism which **allows companies to transfer personal data internally between their units and across borders** is also on the agenda.

Comment: Following internal sources, it is unlikely that EU Member States come to an agreement as several provisions of the proposed Regulation remain highly controversial (e.g. one-stop shop). It seems also unlikely that the file will be adopted under this legislation. The plenary of the Parliament will discuss the proposal on 13 March.

EU: LIBE Committee authorises Snowden's testimony

- On 24 February, the European Parliament's **Civil Liberties Committee** has decided to **authorise Edward Snowden's testimony** in the context of the **Parliament's inquiry into the US snooping** of EU data. Snowden is to provide his answers in writing and the debate could take place during the Committee's meeting on 10 March.
- MEPs from the ECR Group (European Conservatives and Reformists) opposed including Snowden's testimony, while the European People's Party abstained from the vote as it considers that the **report by MEP Claude Moraes** (S&D, United Kingdom) on NSA's surveillance goes already too far.

Open Internet

Turkey: Amendments to the Internet bill may bring specialised courts

- The amendments to the newly signed bill have **passed** the Parliament's Plenary and were **signed into law by President Abdullah Gül** on 28 February.
- Those amendments include a definition of the term "Internet traffic" which cover relevant parties' IP address, start and end time of the provided service, type of service provided, the amount of data transferred and, if applicable, subscription information. Accordingly, the Telecommunications Directorate (TIB) will be able to ask for traffic information when requested by court order.
- According to one of the provisions, in the event that TIB blocks access to a website, its decision will need to be reviewed by a court within 24 hours. However, Süreyya Sadi Bilgiç, MP of the ruling AK Parti added that they may put forward additional amendments to have **specialised courts** handle such cases.
- **Amnesty International Turkey** welcomed the new amendments, but reiterated their continued concerns surrounding freedom of expression since 2007.

Cybersecurity

EU: Cybersecurity strategy, one year later

- At a **cybersecurity conference** in Brussels this week, **Commissioner Kroes** underlined the importance of security for data protection, calling **Snowden's revelations a wake-up call needed by Europe to improve its cyber resilience**.
- Recalling the importance of the **EU cybersecurity strategy** that was presented last year, Kroes underlined the funds available via Horizon 2020 for research and development programmes strengthening trustworthy ICT. One of the examples used was the recently established NIS platform, a public-private platform for network and information security that aims at developing technology-neutral best practices for cybersecurity.
- An important milestone was reached this week as the **European Parliament and the Council agreed on e-identification rules**. As of mid-2015, the EU Member States will recognise e-identification notified by other Member States on a voluntary basis and they will be required to do so from mid-2018.
- As for the proposed **Network and Information Security Directive**, Kroes stated that she will be working closely with the European Parliament and the Member States to have the **Directive adopted by the end of this year**.

Data protection/General

EU: Brazil calls for an undersea cable to Europe

- At the EU-Brazil summit that took place in Brussels on 24 February, Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff described the plans for a \$185 million **undersea cable project between Europe and Brazil** that should allow for a **better protection of data transmitted** between the two partners. Currently, the majority of data is transferred via the USA.
- The project is expected to be completed in 2016

Cloud computing

EU: ENISA publishes list of Cloud Certification schemes

- ENISA has published a **list** of the existing **Cloud Certification schemes** that aim at supporting market uptake of cloud computing. The schemes give cloud customers more transparency about a given service.