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Internet governance

NETmundial participants agree Internet governance should remain self-regulated

- Most of the participants in the high level *NETmundial: the Global Multi-stakeholder Meeting on the Future of Internet Governance* that took place in Sao Paolo, Brazil on 23-24 April agreed that Internet management should **remain a self-regulated space** free of governmental implication. Speaking at the conference, EU Digital Agenda Commissioner **Kroes presented the position of the EU** underlining the need to update the current system of Internet governance.
- In the final **NETmundial Multistakeholder Statement**, the participants identified a set of **common principles and important values** (including freedom of expression and privacy) which are said to contribute to an **inclusive, effective and multistakeholder framework** of Internet governance framework.
- The statement underlined that **security, stability and resilience** of the Internet should be a key objective of all stakeholders. Equally, open standards should be promoted.
- The participants also underlined the need for a **strengthened Internet Governance Forum (IGF)**, including extension of the IGF's mandate beyond five-year terms and ensuring guaranteed stable and predictable funding.
- While calling for a **less US-centric Internet**, most of the participants underlined that governments should not be granted greater control over the Internet, despite lobbying from Russia and China.
- Ross LaJeunesse, Google's head of international relations, underlined that the participants recognised the power of a multistakeholder approach to Internet governance that is considered the best to **guarantee the freedom and openness of the Internet**. Globally, the Internet industry has welcomed the outcome of the talks.

Net neutrality

EU: Member States to discuss the proposed Connected Continent package

- Representative from **EU Member States** will meet on **29 April** to examine the **proposed rules on net neutrality**, as they complete their overview of the proposed **Connected Continent** package. Reportedly, the aim is to present a progress report by June and amendments by September.
- In a note circulated among Member States, **Germany and UK**, home to some of the largest telecom companies in the EU, have called for **large parts of the proposal to be removed**. The paper advocates for **limited rules on net neutrality**.
- This **watered-down approach risks clashing with the European Parliament**, which earlier this month backed more stringent rules. The paper is also said to oppose the proposed harmonisation of spectrum allocation.

Data protection

EU: TTIP negotiators calls for data localisation talks to be included in the EU-US negotiations

- Speaking at a conference this week in Brussels, **Damien Levie**, the Commission's deputy chief negotiator on the **Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership** stated that the talks should address the prospect of national governments forcing companies to **keep the data they collect within domestic borders**. While the governments recognise the growing value of data, companies fear that excessive regulation on how information is being collected and used will increase costs.
- A similar point was made by **Giuseppe Abbamonte at DG Connect** who said that **cross-border data transfers that are yet not part of the TTIP negotiations should be included** in the talks. Abbamonte warned against any national restrictions to data transfers.
- Previously, the **Swedish National Board of Trade** has called on negotiators to discuss data movements within TTIP's negotiations framework- the issue at stake being data transfers to third countries. The board has called for any data localisation regulation to be as focused as possible in order to minimise trade effects.

Cybersecurity

NETmundial calls for greater cooperation in cybersecurity

- In its final statement, the NETmundial participants underlined the need to strengthen **international cooperation on cybersecurity manners**, including jurisdiction and law enforcement assistance. The initiatives to improve cybersecurity should involve appropriate collaboration among governments, private sector, civil society and technical community. To do so, the stakeholders should not launch new initiatives but rather leverage from and improve the already existing cybersecurity organisations.

Copyright infringement

Netherlands: Rebellion of Dutch politicians after pirate download ban

- Dutch politicians are **calling for a debate** with **secretary of state for justice and security Fred Teeven** after the Netherlands decided, earlier this month, that **downloading pirate content was illegal** in the country. The move was triggered by the decision of the Court of Justice of the European Union that argued that there are no legal grounds for the Dutch government to tolerate downloads from illegal sources.
- A proposal backing a debate on the subject was supported by a majority of parties during a vote that took place on 23 April. **Astrid Oosenbrug** (PvdA) stated that users downloading pirated content are suddenly criminalized due to the way the Dutch parliament interprets the EU ruling. In her opinion, any ambiguities should be resolved urgently.
- **Kees Verhoeven** (D66) added that the fight against copyright infringement should rather focus on reduction and elimination of the barriers between consumers and on the legal ways of content supply.

General

EU: Slow frequency allocation threatens broadband for all

- In a recent report, the **European Commission** underlined that the EU Member States have **failed to make enough wireless frequencies** available for mobile broadband, thus threatening the goal of making fast Internet access available “for all” by 2020.
- The report underlined that the Member States, on average, assigned only about 600 MHz to mobile data, while the so-called **Radio Spectrum Policy Program (RSPP)** of the EU from 2012 stipulates that 1,200 megahertz of wireless frequencies be set aside for mobile broadband.
- The **RSPP has failed to stimulate a single market** for achieving the target of 30 Mbps for all by 2020, stipulated the implementation report. The Commission has sent 23 warnings to governments threatening with sanctions.
- In order to remedy the situation, the **Commission’s Connected Continent proposal** that is currently being discussed by the EU governments contains **provisions for further alignment of governments’ frequency assignments** policies for mobile services.

France: Google faces tax demand from the French authorities

- Google has acknowledged that a **tax demand from the French government could reach hundreds of millions of euros** (total could be between €500m and €1bn). Earlier this year, it was reported that the French authorities objected to Google’s tax structure in Europe and sent the company a tax assessment relating to an investigation which began in 2011,
- Other **US Internet companies**, including Amazon and Microsoft, have faced **similar demands in France and in UK**.