

European Regional Bureau Newsletter



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Internet Access

EU: Feedback from negotiations on the European Electronic Communications Code

- On January 23, the European Parliament's Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) Committee heard feedback from the ongoing negotiations on the European Electronic Communications Code.
- Pilar Del Castillo Vera (EPP, ES), rapporteur of the European Electronic Communications Code, said the first trilogue meeting between the co-legislators under the Bulgarian Presidency would take place on 1 February.
- The discussion is now focused on spectrum-related issues, on which agreements may be reached on all issues with the exception of the peer review system, and license length and renewal. They co-legislators will then focus their attention on access and services.
- MEP Del Castillo Vera said the aim was to reach an agreement on the file by April 2018.

Trust

UK: Information Commissioner talks data protection after Brexit

- While addressing the British Parliament's Science and Technology Committee, on January 23, Elizabeth Denham, UK Information Commissioner, [said](#) the country should maintain close ties with the EU after Brexit.
- "Europe will have the largest number of data protection authorities anywhere in the world," she said, adding the EU will have "a lot of power to determine what big companies will do with people's data."
- The statement comes months ahead of the implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), set to enter into force on 25 May. The UK Parliament is currently discussing the Data Protection Bill which will bring EU rules into UK law.
- Regarding the GDPR, in a recent statement, Matt Hancock, the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Secretary, said figures showed many British businesses "need to act to make sure the personal data they hold is secure." He then invited them to seek help from Information Commissioner's Office and the National Cyber

Security Centre in order to improve their cybersecurity and data privacy capabilities.

EU: Commission releases new guidance on the GDPR

- On January 24, the European Commission [published](#) a [guidance](#) document to facilitate a “direct and smooth application of the new data protection rules as of 25 May,” when the General Data Protection Regulation will start applying in the EU.
- The Commission [called](#) on EU governments and data protection authorities to be ready to provide support to businesses and the civil society. It added that, as of today, only two EU countries have already completed the transposition of the GDPR into national legislation
- To help bring the preparation to a successful completion, the Commission has also launched a new online tool, which targets in particular small and medium enterprises.

EU: Digital Commissioner Gabriel on the Cybersecurity Act

- On January 23, the European Parliament's Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) held an exchange of views with Mariya Gabriel, European Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society, on the “[Cybersecurity Act](#)”, which updates the mandate of the European agency ENISA and introduces a European certification framework for cybersecurity.
- Commissioner Gabriel emphasized the important role ENISA has played since its establishment in 2005 in boosting the EU's resilience in cybersecurity, stimulating cooperation, providing support and sharing its know-how with the Member States.
- On the proposed EU certification framework, she said the Agency would play an important role in preparing certification schemes, allowing citizens to have access to more information on security services, encourage operators to purchase certified products and make available a certificate that is valid across the EU.
- She added that the proposed framework does not create any regulatory obligations for service providers, instead it will be a voluntary system so as to avoid imposing unnecessary costs on industry. “The framework is not a one-size fits all approach for everybody,” she specified.

Global: WEF launches new Global Centre for Cybersecurity

- On January 24, the World Economic Forum (WEF) launched a new [Global Centre for Cybersecurity](#) to help build a safe and secure global cyberspace.
- Based in Geneva, Switzerland, the centre will be headed by Alois Zwinggi (Managing Director at the WEF) and will function as an autonomous organization under the WEF's auspices. Interpol will be a crucial partner for the centre.
- In a recent [publication](#), the World Economic Forum has recognized cybersecurity as one of the world's most critical risks. In response, the new cybersecurity centre will draw on the WEF's government and industry support to work for a more secure cyberspace through a multi-stakeholder approach.

UK: Theresa May's tech-focussed Davos speech

- On January 25, British Prime Minister Theresa May took the floor at the World Economic Forum annual meeting, highlighting the importance of the development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and cyber skills for the country's future.
- May [urged](#) investors to make a difference “by ensuring trust and safety issues are being properly considered,” and called on social networks to stop providing a platform for terror, extremism and child abuse.

- Furthermore, she stressed the urgency of reducing the skills deficit and invited organisations to invest in transferable higher-level skills, more suitable for the digital era.
- PM May also used her keynote to [announce](#) the creation of the UK's first Institute of Coding (IoC). This will bring together a world-class consortium of over 60 universities, professional bodies and tech companies.
- On the same day, the UK Government published its [Digital Charter](#), a “rolling program of work to agree norms and rules for the online world and put them into practice” AI, liability of online platforms and cybersecurity are amongst the priorities.

UK: NHS patient data confidentiality rules to be loosened

- The British government plans to loosen these confidentiality rules in order to better track illegal immigrants and criminals. Currently patient confidentiality should only be breached in the case of “serious offences”.
- The plans have attracted concern from patient advocacy groups and bio-ethicists, who among other things say that such a change in the rules could deter vulnerable patients such as migrant workers from going to the doctor even if they have a serious condition.

EU: Qualcomm fined €997m for paying Apple to exclusively use its chips

- The European Commission [fined](#) the US chipmaker Qualcomm €997m for paying Apple to use only its chips in the iPhone, illegally locking out rivals.
- The decision follows an investigation launched in 2015, covering the period between 2011 and 2016, investigating Qualcomm's dominance in the market for modems and chips required to connect handsets to 4G mobile phone networks.
- The company's Executive Vice-President, Don Rosenberg, said they are confident this agreement “did not violate EU competition rules or adversely affect market competition or European consumers.” Qualcomm will seek judicial review.

EU: WP on Telecommunications and Information Society meeting

- The Working Party on Telecommunications and Information Society [meets](#) on January 30 to examine the latest Presidency [discussion paper](#) on the proposal for a Regulation on Privacy and Electronic Communications (ePrivacy Regulation).
- The document focuses on options on Articles 12 to 16 of the ePR which deal with restriction of calling and connected line identification and direct marketing calls.

Others

Global: World Economic Forum takes action towards an “IT reskilling revolution”

- On January 22, the World Economic Forum released a new report [Towards a Reskilling Revolution: A Future of Jobs for All](#). According to the document, the 4th Industrial Revolution, and the rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and robotics, threatens to outdate workers' skillsets and affect labour markets globally. Reskilling is thus deemed necessary.
- The report introduces a new practical approach to identifying reskilling pathways and job transition opportunities for workers facing decreasing job prospects, using big data analysis of online job postings. WEF aims to “move the debate on the

future of work to new — and practical — territory,” helping individuals, companies and governments to prioritize their actions and investments.

- The following day, on January 23, WEF launched the “first ever IT industry initiative to bring competitive training content together on one platform.” The aim is to reach 1 million people by January 2021 for training and resource opportunities to meet the global skills gap challenge via the WEF’s [SkillSET](#) portal.