

European Regional Bureau Newsletter



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Internet Access

EU: Feedback on the EECC

- On February 22, Spanish MEP Pilar del Castillo Vera (EPP), during an ITRE Committee meeting, gave a feedback on the ongoing trialogues on the European Electronic Communications Code (EECC).
- The third trialogue on the EECC took place on February 1, and mostly focused on spectrum provisions.

The next meeting between the co-legislators (European Commission, European Parliament and the Council of the EU), will take place on March 1. The objective is to reach an agreement on the entire spectrum chapter, notably on the coordinated timing of assignment (Art. 28, 53, 54); on the coordinated timing for specific 5G bands (Art. 53 A); the duration of rights (Art. 49 and 50); and on the peer review mechanism (Art. 35).

- Other matters to be discussed include regulating intra EU-calls tariffs as well as the co-investment model (Art. 74).

EU: Industry releases joint statement on spectrum reform for 5G

- Major industry associations – DIGITALEUROPE, ETNO and the GSMA – have released a [joint statement](#) calling for a shift from “political narratives to regulatory delivery” on spectrum reform.
- Ahead of the fourth trialogue on the European Electronic Communications Code, the associations believe that the ongoing telecoms reform is the EU’s only opportunity to make significant progress towards the Gigabit Society and 5G deployment.
- The joint statement stresses the urgency to reach an agreement on an effective peer-review system and longer spectrum licenses to ensure the competitiveness of the region.

Trust

EU: INTERPOL’s Digital Security Challenge

- INTERPOL’s annual flagship [Digital Security Challenge](#) took place on February 19-21, in cooperation with the INTERPOL National Central Bureau in Vienna and private sector partners NEC Corporation and Cyber Defense Institute.

- The event focused on Internet of Things (IoT)'s cyber risks and cyber threats. 43 cybercrime investigators and digital forensics experts from 23 different countries simulated cyber-attack on a bank using an IoT device, trying to steal a large amount of money.
- The training sessions aimed to develop participants' practical knowledge on IoT device analysis and increase awareness on the latest trends in cyber threats.

EU: POLITICO interviews the U.K.'s Deputy Information Commissioner

- In an interview with POLITICO, Steve Wood, the U.K.'s Deputy Information Commissioner, said that companies were questioning whether they needed a new legal basis for data transfers after Brexit.
- Technically, after the final split from the EU, the UK loses its right to move information from other EU Member States. Cross-border data transfers could thus be at risk if the two parties cannot manage to find an agreement before Brexit.
- The UK will adopt the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in its national legislation and has also stressed the need to reach an adequacy agreement with the EU.
- However, it is not clear whether the two blocs will manage to finalise an agreement in the coming year. Mr Wood refused to comment on when the UK would sign a data-transfer agreement with the EU.

EU: European Parliament's free flow of data workshop

- On February 20, the European Parliament's Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee (IMCO) held a workshop on "Free Flow of Data Regulation - a cornerstone of the Digital Single Market".
- The purpose of the event was to give Members of the EP and stakeholders the chance to explore in greater depth the various elements of the European Commission's proposed regulation, and to support the decision-making process in-house.
- Commission Vice-president Andrus Ansip stated that the EC's proposal aims to fight forced data localization and encourage the free movement of data within the EU, while allowing businesses to share data needed for the development of Artificial intelligence (AI) across borders.
- VP Ansip added that the free flow of data was essential for the development of AI, and that Europe could lag behind if it does not allow data to freely flow across EU borders.

EU: EP ITRE Committee on the free flow of non-personal data

- On February 21, the parliamentary Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) discussed a [draft opinion](#) on a European Commission's proposal aiming at establishing a framework for the free flow of non-personal data in the EU.
- The opinion's rapporteur, Zdzisław Krasnodębski (ECR, PL), presented his position, which clarifies that restrictions to the location of data for storage or other processing shall be adequate and proportionate; aligns the definition of data processing with the text of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR); and introduces simplified user access to information across the region.
- MEPs stressed the importance of the free movement of non-personal data and of ending unjustified localisation for European companies. The issue of mixed data sets, and unbundling them, remains particularly contentious and complex.

- An EC representative drew attention to the fact that the Commission will adopt a new digital package this spring, which will include a number of important elements for the European Data Economy as a whole.

EU: EP IMCO members discuss Cybersecurity Act

- On February 21, the European Parliament Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO) [held](#) a debate on the proposals to reform ENISA (the EU Cybersecurity Agency), and create a cybersecurity certification framework through a piece of legislation known as the "Cybersecurity Act".
- Members who took the floor agreed that the proposed legislation is timely and needed, given the dramatic rise of cybersecurity breaches and cyber threats over recent years.
- There was general consensus on the fact that any EU-wide certification framework must be robust and afford a high degree of protection for consumers. Most MEPs agreed on the voluntary approach put forward by the Commission, but they stressed the need for strong incentives for companies to adopt the certification process.

EU: Digital Commissioner Gabriel addresses IMCO Committee members

- On February 22, the European Parliament Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO) [held](#) an exchange of views with EU Digital Commissioner Mariya Gabriel, as part of a structured dialogue.
- Amongst other things, the discussion touched upon the free flow of non-personal data, cybersecurity, and illegal content online.
- On the free movement of non-personal data, Commissioner Gabriel agreed that the negotiations between the co-legislators should start during the Bulgarian Presidency. She argued that data needs to move freely across the EU and any restrictions have to be targeted and justifiable.
- On cybersecurity, she assured MEPs that the EC wants all stakeholders to actively participate in developing the envisaged EU certification framework. A transparent and inclusive approach is needed, she added.
- On illicit and illegal content, the Commission will publish a recommendation at the end of February, based on the communication adopted in September 2017, and partially focused on terrorism.

Others

EU: Digital tax high on the EU's political agenda

- During DIGITALEUROPE's "Masters of Digital 2018" conference, on February 20, European Commissioner for economic and financial affairs, Pierre Moscovici, said a proposal on digital tax would be presented next month.
- He did not specify the type of tax that would be applied to tech companies, but he stressed the importance of finding a "fair and balanced way to establish taxing rights" and establish a "fair and effective way to reflect new forms of value creation in the allocation of profits."
- Commissioner Moscovici claimed that, with a proposal on the table, the EU would assume full leadership and "propose ambitious solutions at an international level."