

European Regional Bureau Newsletter



12 May 2018 – 18 May 2018

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Internet Access

Global: WEF new report on financing an Internet for All

- On May 14, the World Economic Forum (WEF) published a new report on "[Financing a Forward-Looking Internet for All](#)".
- The document calls on governments to invest in the development of a "robust digital ecosystem that can facilitate participation in the Fourth Industrial Revolution."
- It develops a framework of different national Internet "maturity levels" to provide a common vocabulary for the extent to which the Internet is incorporated into citizens' lives. It aims at facilitating discussion between the public, private and civic spheres.
- It also highlights that Internet access alone does not guarantee growth, and that what is needed is access with sufficient quality and speed to support a mature Internet ecosystem.

EU: Commission launches Wifi4EU call for applications

- On 15 May, the European Commission launched a [call](#) for applications for [WiFi4EU](#).
- The total indicative budget available for the applications selected under this call is EUR 17 745 000 and the deadline for submission of applications is June 15.
- The selected municipalities will get a voucher of EUR 15 000 to cover the equipment and installation costs of Wi-Fi hotspots, and to be used within 1.5 years of being awarded the voucher.
- Municipalities will be selected on a first-come, first-serve basis with no more than 8% of this call's budget allocated per country.

The Netherlands: Rights group to appeal against T-Mobile over net neutrality rules

- Rights group Bits of Freedom (BoF) is planning to appeal against T-Mobile for violating EU net neutrality laws in The Netherlands.
- BoF said T-Mobile's "free" music streaming programme was used for commercial purposes, and wants to appeal the Dutch regulator (ACM)'s decision to not sanction the provided for net neutrality violations.
- "It's not up to an Internet provider to for instance privilege a couple of services by not charging for the Internet traffic" these services generate, argued David Korteweg from BoF.

Trust

EU: EP report on illegal content online: yes or not?

- The Conference of Committee Chairs gave the European Parliament till April 30 to decide which Committee to allocate all own-initiative reports, including the one on tackling the sharing of illegal content online.
- However, an agreement among the different parliamentary Committee was not found within the set deadline and the Parliament might not be able to draft a resolution on the matter anymore.
- It is rumoured however that a political group or individual MEP may still propose to draft a report to discuss at plenary level.

EU: Communication on completing a trusted Digital Single Market for all

- Ten days before the entry into force of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the European Commission issued a [Communication](#) on completing a trusted Digital Single Market for all. This served as the Commission's contribution to an informal discussion that EU leaders held in Bulgaria on May 16.
- This includes a set of concrete actions that Member States can take to protect individuals' privacy and to allow for the finalisation of the Digital Single Market before the end of the year.
- The document states that most EU Member States still need to take necessary measures to ensure that their national regulatory system fully complies with the regulation and that their national data protection authorities have adequate resources to fulfil their roles. It urges Member States to adopt the GDPR as soon as possible.
- The Communication also calls on the Council of the EU to swiftly agree on a common position on the ePrivacy Regulation, in order to find an agreement this autumn; and on the co-legislators to find an agreement on the Regulation on free flow of non-personal data by June 2018
- The document highlights that the Commission issued a framework to allow the EU to maximise the benefits of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and has put forward an objective of annual investments by private and public players of at least € 20 billion annually in the 2020-2030 period.

EU: Most EU Member States have not yet adopted national rules to implement the GDPR

- European Justice Commissioner Věra Jourová [stated](#) that only four EU Member States have adopted national laws implementing the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- Speaking just days ahead of the entry into force of the new data law, set on May 25, only Austria, Germany, Slovakia and Sweden have completed the transposition procedure. Many others, such as the UK, are at a final stage.
- Commissioner Jourová has also recently warned Germany that some of its national provisions may not be compatible with the GDPR. The Commission will continue a dialogue on this with Germany.

EU: SMEs and the GDPR

- On May 15, industry organisations UEAPME, EUROCHAMBRES and HOTREC sent a [joint letter](#) to Justice Commissioner Vera Jourová asking the Commission to recommend to national governments and authorities “not to immediately impose fines on SMEs during the first year of application of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)” and to continue to invest in support and advice for small businesses.

- Meanwhile, the Commission, in order to help businesses and especially SMEs prepare for the GDPR, recently published a new “seven steps” [guide](#) for companies who do not handle personal data as a core business activity.

Global: Kaspersky to establish data centre for transparency in Switzerland

- On May 15, Russian cybersecurity firm Kaspersky Lab [announced](#) it would relocate some of its operations from Moscow to Switzerland, in an attempt to increase transparency and protection of its data processing and software development infrastructure.
- This means it will move the servers that process and store Kaspersky Security Network data for users located in several regions, including Europe and Japan.
- According to reliable sources, the decision was taken to “ease concerns over laws that let Russian security services monitor data transmissions inside the country.

Global: Taiwan does not see EU data protection rules as a global standard setter

- According to a recent [article](#) in Politico, Audrey Tang, Taiwan’s Digital Minister, does not believe that the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) can or should serve as a global standard setter on data protection.
- Tang cited “differing social norms” as one reason, and promoted an approach that balances the interests of “private and civil society”. On the one hand she sees the GDPR requirement for the data operator to explain in understandable terms what is being done with a customer’s data as a “real innovation”, but on the other she opposes the idea of granting privileges to research organisations.
- She also warned EU lawmakers not to rush ahead on legislating on Artificial Intelligence (AI).

EU: IMCO Committee adopts Cybersecurity Act opinion

- On May 17, the European Parliament Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO) adopted a draft opinion by Rapporteur Nicola Danti (S&D, Italy) on "The Cybersecurity Act".
- 393 amendments were tabled in IMCO and the Rapporteur proposed 25 compromises. These focus on issues including the involvement of stakeholders, more transparency for common cybersecurity actions, the use of self-declaration of conformity, and information to and protection of end-users.
- The compromises also add more elements to the future certification schemes to ensure that new schemes will consider existing standards and security-by-design principles.
- Lobby group DIGITALEUROPE [welcomed](#) the outcome of the vote and called on MEPs to preserve the “voluntary approach to certification” in the final EP report.

Global: Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg to appear at the European Parliament

- On May 22, Facebook’s Chief Executive Officer Mark Zuckerberg will [meet](#) with the leaders of political groups in the European Parliament on May 22, following the Cambridge Analytica scandal.
- European Parliament President Antonio Tajani originally wanted the meeting to be closed-door. However, following pressure from Justice Commissioner [Věra Jourová](#) and from five of the eight parliamentary political groups, the hearing will be [web streamed](#).

EU: EU stakeholders to discuss implementation of blockchain

- On May 24, [an event](#) hosted by Member of the European Parliament Antanas Guoga (EPP, Lithuania) will see high level representatives from the USA, Japan, Australia,

Canada and Lithuania come together to “present their views on the key aspects of blockchain technology, how it is impacting financial sectors, changing cyber-physical systems and creating new ways of guaranteeing provenance”.

- The event will take place at the Australian mission to the EU and is organized in cooperation with the U.S., Canadian, Japanese and Lithuanian diplomatic representations to the EU.