

# European Regional Bureau Newsletter



3 March – 10 March 2017

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## Internet Access

### **EU: Ansip optimistic about the future of 5G**

- Following the World Mobile Congress, Commission Vice President Andrus Ansip claimed in an [interview](#) that Europe was in a good position to lead the race on 5G thanks to the 5G Action Plan and the reforms to telecom rules.
- On the free flow of data, Ansip recalled the ongoing discussions with Member States to assess their “digital border controls.” A first dialogue happened on 23 February. The Commission will consider infringement proceedings if necessary.

### **EU: Commission published Digital Headlines**

- On 3 March, together with the Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI), the Commission [published](#) Digital Headlines for “Advancing Europe’s digital future” calling on EU leaders to endorse Digital Single Markets (DSM) policies.
- Ahead of the mid-term review of the DSM in May, it stressed the need to invest in very high-capacity connectivity, and ensure high levels of data protection and cybersecurity.

### **EU: Discussions over the copyright reform and link tax**

- The newspaper Politico released a leaked version of the European Parliament’s draft report on copyright.
- The draft report gets rid of the so-called neighbouring right for press publishers and instead proposes that publishers would have the right to sue in their own name when defending the rights of authors for the digital use of their works.
- The leaked report also claims it will bring more clarity to the question of the obligations of platforms to monitor copyright infringements.

### **EU: Results of the open consultation for the Next Generation Initiative (NGI)**

- On 6 March, the final report of the open consultation for the Next Generation Initiative (NGI), held between 10th November 2016 and 9th January 2017, was released.
- In general, the 449 participants [believed](#) that citizens' sovereignty over their own data should be ensured, and privacy protected. They also felt that the Internet should ensure diversity, pluralism and the right to choose and avoid the concentration of data in a few proprietary platforms.

### **EU: Commission Rolling Plan for ICT Standardisation**

- On 3 March, the Commission [released](#) its 2017 Rolling Plan on ICT Standardisation. It aims to provide a bridge between EU policies and standardisation activities in ICT.
- The Plan refers to five priority domains: 5G, IoT, Cybersecurity, Cloud and Big Data, already identified by the Commission in its previous Communication on ICT Priority

Standards. It indicates actions in support of them as well as a number of other areas such as FinTech, smart cities, transport, advanced manufacturing or robotics.

#### **EU: Parliament discussions on the report on European gigabit society and 5G**

- On 6 March, the European Parliament Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO) held a discussion on the European gigabit society.
- The debate focused on the need for investment and public-private partnerships to provide the necessary infrastructure.
- The S&D group outlined four priorities: the development of IoT, the financing of new infrastructures to reach the 2025 connectivity objective, the removal of the digital divide between rural and urban areas and the standardisation of 5G technology.

#### **EU: Ansip and Avramopoulos to travel to the US to discuss digital aspects of transatlantic cooperation**

- Commission Vice President Andrus Ansip started [a three-day visit to Washington DC](#). He will meet new U.S. Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross to discuss EU-US cooperation on a number of ICT issues, such as the EU-US Privacy Shield, cyber security, digital globalisation, data economy and internet governance.
- Commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos together with Maltese and Estonian Council Presidency Ministers will pay a visit to Silicon Valley to meet with US internet companies and discuss anti-terrorism projects.

#### **EU: BEREC 2017 main priorities**

- In [an ETNO Think Digital video](#), Sébastien Soriano, 2017 BEREC Chair and President, discussed the three main priorities for regulators in 2017: reviewing the telecom code, implementing net neutrality rules and developing activities in the field of mobile networks.
- At the World Mobile Congress, he [stated](#) BEREC support for the Commission's proposal to harmonize National Regulation Authorities' competencies on market shaping aspects of spectrum management and insisted on the need to pursue the transatlantic dialogue to favour open access to the internet.

#### **Germany: The government will invest €100 billion in broadband networks through 2025**

- On 7 March, German federal minister for digital infrastructure, Alexander Dobrindt, together with several major European telecoms companies, including Deutsche Telekom, Vodafone and Telefónica, announced [a plan to invest €100 billion in broadband networks through 2025](#).
- The German Minister specified that the project will focus not only on a wide bandwidth but also on security.

## Trust

#### **Global: WikiLeaks dumps alleged secret CIA hacking files**

- On 7 March, [WikiLeaks](#) began to publish a new series of leaked CIA documents. The first part "Year Zero" includes 8,761 files describing the hacking tools the US Central Intelligence Agency allegedly used to gather intelligence.
- The CIA [defended](#) its intelligence gathering mission and argued that the agency exists to "aggressively collect foreign intelligence."
- On 9 March, WikiLeaks agreed to share the documents with tech firms and said it would release "additional details" later.

#### **EU: DigitalEurope on data flows in trade agreements**

- On 8 March, DigitalEurope released a position paper [warning](#) the European Commission about the risks of data protectionism.
- It claimed that the approach currently being considered risked making it "easier for third countries to introduce protectionist measures, forced data localization and restrictions to market access by misusing the privacy exceptions."

- It stated that any trade agreement should recognise the free flow of data in the promotion of digital trade.

**EU: Council to address ePrivacy Regulation at the end of March**

- The proposed ePrivacy Regulation will only be addressed by the Council members on March 31. Member States will have an opportunity to request clarifications by the European Commission before adopting any position later in the year.
- Meanwhile, criticism and doubts continue to be issued by different players. Industry stakeholders have criticised the Commission's move to include machine-to-machine communication in the scope of the regulation.

**US: Renewed support for EU-US Privacy Shield**

- At an address to his Department's employees, the newly confirmed US Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross confirmed the US interest in supporting the transatlantic data transfer agreement. He stated that "We must build upon hard work many of you have done in support of privacy shield".

**The Netherlands: All-Paper election amid fear of Russian election hacking**

- The Dutch government confirmed its decision to return to paper-based voting for the upcoming general election of 15 March.
- This drastic response could inspire other countries which are holding important elections this year. France already announced that the electronic vote will not be possible for the legislative election of next June.