

European Regional Bureau Newsletter



1 April – 7 April 2017

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Internet Access

EU: Parliament formally approves abolition of roaming charges

- On 6 April 2017, the European Parliament voted in Strasbourg to formally approve the Telecom Single Market (TSM) Regulation, which will effectively abolish excessive roaming charges for European mobile phone users.
- However, Internet users will wait a little longer to fully benefit from the new rules – while wholesale caps on voice calls and SMS services come in immediately on the 15 June 2017, data caps will at first remain high, at €7.70/GB, eventually projected to settle at €2.50 per GB by 2022.

Global: G20 Digital Ministers meet in Düsseldorf

- On 6-7 April, the first G20 Digital Ministers' meeting was launched in Düsseldorf, with German Minister for Economic Affairs, Brigitte Zypries, outlining fast Internet for all by 2025, harmonised technical standards and lifelong digital learning as the three primary goals for the conference. The Joint Declaration adopted on 7 April highlighted the need for strengthening trust in the digital world.
- However, it was pointed out by Internet Society's CEO in a comment to POLITICO that an opportunity to recognise the importance of encryption has been missed. Kathy Brown said: "We need to deconstruct the issues faced by law enforcement and agree together how we can achieve a trusted digital economy underpinned by encryption."

EU: European e-communications regulators talk net neutrality with India

- A delegation from the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC) spent the week of 29 March to 5 April on mission in India, where net neutrality, IT and digital ecosystem were on the agenda for discussions with Indian counterparts TRAI.
- The BEREC Chair stated that net neutrality would be the focus of much of the body's work in 2017, and sought common ground on the topic with India, referring to it as a "democratic issue".

EU: Commissioner Ansip outlines aspects of WiFi4EU proposal

- In response to a written question from MEP Anneleen Van Bossuyt (ECR/Belgium), the Commissioner for the Digital Single Market stated that the EU-wide programme would bring free WiFi to 6-8,000 community locations.
- Private operators will not be affected by the scheme, as it will not apply to exclude “projects that duplicate already existing private or public offers of similar characteristics (including quality of service) in the same area”.

Trust

EU: Security Union Commissioner promotes “enhanced information sharing” in anti-terrorism cooperation

- Speaking in Tallinn, Estonia, Commissioner Julian King proposed further cooperation between EU Member States on security-related IT initiatives, highlighting the need for increased interoperability for the sharing of data – last year alone, national authorities “checked persons and objects against data held in the Schengen Information Systems on nearly 4 billion occasions”.
- Referring to cyber threats as the greatest challenge to law enforcement authorities around the world, the Commissioner went on to say: “And it is not just criminals. Others too seek to exploit vulnerabilities in our cyber security”.

EU: MEPs pass resolution calling for further action on EU-US Privacy Shield

- On Wednesday 5 April, the European Parliament passed a resolution in which it pointed out numerous weaknesses and loopholes in the agreement on data transfers, which is up for review in September.
- In particular, the resolution highlights inadequate protections for Europeans against mass surveillance, a lack of clarity regarding rules for procedures such as the right to object, and doubts the legal strength of American assurances which date back to the Obama administration.

EU: Data Protection Authorities meet to discuss challenges of new GDPR

- The Article 29 Working Party organised the second edition of the Fab Lab workshop with industry and consumer organisations to discuss future guidelines on consent, profiling and data breach notifications. It was stated that new guidelines would be produced by the end of the year.
- Guidelines on portability, data protection officers and the lead supervisory authorities have been finalised following a consultation with stakeholders. They were adopted by the plenary of the Article 29 Working Party.

EU: European Commission workshop on the implementation of the GDPR

- Following the Fab Lab event, DG Justice invited industry associations and representatives of consumer groups to attend a workshop on the consistent application of the GDPR and on international data transfers.
- The European Commission is already preparing for its annual review of the Privacy Shield in September. This year’s review, which is also the first, will consist on a series of bilateral meetings with the US counterparts.
- The European Commission is expected to adopt implementing acts on certification mechanisms and also processor-to-processor data transfer mechanism.