

ISOC European Regional Bureau Newsletter

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Internet Access

EU: Expect slow progress on European Electronic Communications Code

- Council Digital attaché for Estonia, Luukas Ilves, warned this week that it was unlikely that the Council of the EU would reach a final position on the Commission's recent telecoms proposals by the end of the Estonian Presidency of the Council of the EU (December 2017).
- Instead, the Bulgarian Presidency, running from January to June 2018, is likely to finalise this work.

EU: Telecoms Rapporteur to focus on internet platform regulation

- Spanish conservative MEP Pilar del Castillo Vera, the Parliament's rapporteur on the European Electronic Communications Code, announced that she would seek a level playing field between telecoms operators and internet companies.
- Although, the MEP intends to look into regulation of such companies, her ability to do so has been somewhat curtailed – as a separate Parliamentary Committee (Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection) is now expected to deal with this part of the telecoms reform.

Trust

EU: Germany not opposing free flow of data

- 16 EU Member States, including the Scandinavian and Baltic blocs, as well as the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Belgium and Poland, have urged the European Commission in a letter to come up with legislative rules on the free flow of data.
- While Germany was not amongst the signatories, German diplomats claimed earlier this week that they would not oppose a free flow of data regulation as long as privacy and security concerns were adequately dealt with.

EU: LIBE Committee to lead parliamentary work on ePrivacy

- The committee on Civil Liberties will lead the European Parliament's position on the proposed ePrivacy Regulation, while the committees for industry and for legal affairs will be invited to provide the lead committee with opinions.
- Business-friendly and tech-savvy MEPs Axel Voss and Michal Boni from the European Popular Party have been suggested as the most likely MEPs to assume the role of rapporteur.
- Jan Albrecht, the German Green MEP who was the rapporteur on the Data Protection Regulation, has already shared that his group is particularly interested in reintroducing "privacy-by-design" obligations and limitations to the use of metadata.

France: CNIL launches public debate on algorithms

- The French DPA, CNIL, is launching a public debate on algorithms based on the results of a survey showing a strong suspicion from the French public regarding the rise of big data technologies.
- CNIL is expecting public authorities and universities to participate in discussions on the topic during a series of conferences and talks organized over the course of the year.

EU: US executive order on public safety could threaten transatlantic data flows

- On Wednesday, US President Trump signed an executive order that directs federal agencies to exclude non-Americans from protections provided under the US Privacy Act.
- Some have claimed that such an order threatens the Privacy Shield Agreement that governs data exchanges between the EU and US.
- The European Commission responded, however, that the Privacy Shield does not rely on the US privacy Act, and that the U.S. Judicial Redress Act ensures that the benefits of the US Privacy Act also apply to Europeans even following Trump's order.

EU: UK looking for loopholes in ECJ ruling on Investigatory Powers Act

- Following the ECJ's decision that declared mass data gathering and retention under the UK's Investigatory Powers Act illegal, the UK's Home Secretary Amber Rudd asked her European counterparts during a meeting of Justice and Home Affairs Ministers on Thursday to help look for loopholes in the ECJ's ruling.
- Rudd argued that weakening the UK's Act could increase cross-border crime across the EU.

France: More than 2 700 websites blocked last year

- During a conference on cybersecurity in Lille on Wednesday, French Interior Minister Bruno Le Roux stated that France had blocked more than 2 700 websites last year.
- Following the attacks on Charlie Hebdo in January 2015, French Authorities have been granted the right to remove content in order to fight hate speech and terrorist content online.

EU: National elections face cyberattacks and Russian fake news campaigns

- According to the news agency AFP, the Netherlands, France and Germany will be subject to increased Russian efforts to discredit their leaders ahead of national elections this year.
- The EU's East StratCom Task Force, which was set up to tackle Russian fake news, found over the past 15 months more than 2500 examples in 18 languages of stories contradicting publicly available facts.
- In the run up to the general elections in March, the Dutch government is helping political parties to enhance their cybersecurity to protect themselves from cyberattacks. On Monday, the Interior Minister and the Security Minister sent a letter to the Dutch Parliament, outlining the next steps to enhance the digital security of political parties.
- Meanwhile, Thomas Clay, chairman of the committee for the primary vote of the French Socialist Party presidential candidate, said last week's primary elections suffered from a series of cyberattacks but that the attacks were successfully mitigated by the party's firewall.

EU: MEP Schaake joins international Commission on cyber security

- Dutch liberal MEP Marietje Schaake will become a member of the Global Commission on the Stability of Cyberspace (GCSC).
- Initiated by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the newly founded GCSC will be led by the former Estonian Foreign Minister Marina Kaljurand with the objective of promoting mutual awareness and understanding among cyberspace communities working on issues related to international cybersecurity.

EU: Commission to update cybersecurity plan

- Against the backdrop of new types of cyberattacks and the rise of fake news, the European Commission plans to update its cybersecurity strategy of 2013 and present an analysis of EU cyber agency ENISA.
- Despite some reports in the media that this update could come as early as May, discussions are still at an early stage and the strategy is more likely to be released later in the year.