

# European Regional Bureau Newsletter



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## Internet Access

### EU: 5G receives €250m investment boost

- The European Investment Bank has signed a €250m loan agreement with Swedish telecoms company Ericsson as part of the Juncker Plan to support research and development in 5G technology, the Commission [announced](#) on May 31 2018.
- Ericsson's project will include the development of hardware and software for the Radio Access Network (RAN), which connects mobile devices to the core network.
- Most of the RDI activities will take place in Sweden, with minor parts also being carried out in Ireland, Spain, Poland and other EU countries. Starting this year, the project is planned to be completed by 2020.

### UK: Digital Minister calls for work on 5G

- Britain's Digital Minister Margot James has [called](#) for a new generation of mobile phone masts to be built in rural areas across the country to better harness the economic potential of 5G networks.
- According to industry leaders in the telecoms sector, the slow building of the masts is due to time-consuming planning procedures. Ms James said her government was committed to "cracking the planning issue".
- Much of the concern originates from local communities voicing their opposition to the installation of masts needed to support wireless voice and data signals.
- According to the Minister: "People complain more about poor connectivity than masts being built...That may be different in areas of natural beauty but, in general, many consumers and most SMEs realised that masts enabled the connectivity".

## Trust

### Global: Facebook popularity and trust falling among teenagers, says survey

- According to a recent [survey](#) by the Pew Research Centre, usage of Facebook among teenagers has fallen from 71% in 2014-2015 to just 51%.

- Only 10% of teens said Facebook was their most visited social media site, compared to 35% who said they visit Snapchat the most, 32% for YouTube, and 15% Instagram.
- This is an important change from Pew's same study published three years ago, when 41% of teens said Facebook was the site they most used, followed by Instagram at 20%, and Snapchat at 11%.

#### EU: Digital Agenda almost 50% complete, says Commission VP Andrus Ansip

- Ministers from Member States were updated by Andrus Ansip, Vice President of the European Commission leading on the Digital Single Market, at the Competitiveness Council [meeting](#) on Monday 28 May, and told that the EU had completed exactly 48% of its digital agenda as it reaches the end of the Bulgarian Presidency.
- In the next six months, the Commission hopes to build on the work on data protection, data portability and the soon-to-be-agreed telecoms reform to encourage a speedy adoption of the remaining files on copyright, e-privacy, digital contracts rules.
- On July 1 2018, the Austrian government will take-over the six months rotating presidency of the Council of the EU and be responsible for shepherding the files.

#### EU: Online advertisement industry warns of surge in cookies banners with GDPR

- Representatives from the online advertisement industry have warned this week that Europe's new privacy rules are likely to bring a proliferation of cookie banners.
- The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is expected to render consent notification larger and more complex, resulting in banners that take up more screen-space. They will also be harder to ignore or click through without reading.
- The concerns of the online ad industry coincide with [reports](#) this week that US publishers shut down access to their sites due to concerns over the GDPR's provision that new privacy rules hold companies liable for using European citizens' data without the proper consent or legal basis, with the possibility of triggering fines up to 4 percent of the company's global turnover.
- But data protection researchers have called these concerns overblown, describing it as "GDPR hysteria", said researcher Lukasz Olejnik who [explains](#) that in some of these cases the decisions are based on unsound or over-cautious GDPR advice.

#### EU: Business groups voice concern about ePrivacy rules

- A group of 57 digital industry interest groups have sent a [letter](#) to EU Ministers urging them to ensure greater consistency between the e-Privacy Regulation, currently under scrutiny by the European Parliament, and the recently introduced General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- The groups include tech associations, car makers, publishers, chambers of commerce and was [coordinated](#) by the European Gaming and Betting Association (EGBA).
- In the letter, dated 31 May 2018, the associations say that "the e-Privacy Regulation proposal has departed from the laudable objective of protecting the

confidentiality of communications and goes on instead to greatly limit the processing of a broad array of both personal and non-personal data.”

- Digital ministers will examine the file in a meeting with the Telecoms Council next week on June 8. A lack of progress this month would make it highly unlikely the law would be finalized before the EU institutions break-up for the elections.

#### **Ireland: Ireland could become Europe’s hub for AI, says Huawei**

- Ireland is on the path to becoming Europe’s hub for artificial intelligence, according to recent analysis released by Chinese tech company Huawei.
- The company’s “[Global Connectivity Index](#)” cited Ireland for “aggressively investing into AI to win a competitive edge in the digital economy” in a report which ranks the efforts of governments around the world to digitize their countries’ industries, cities and administrations.
- Among the advantages cited by Huawei were Ireland’s “low taxes, good connectivity, and a submarine cable system to France that will bypass the U.K., which is set to launch in 2019.”

#### **Germany: Chancellor Merkel meets experts to plan AI Strategy**

- German Chancellor Angela Merkel and several of her ministers met some of Germany’s leading AI experts to kick off a process that will lead to Germany releasing its own AI strategy by autumn 2018.
- Despite benefiting from a strong research and manufacturing base, some consider Germany to be falling behind other European countries like France, which launched its strategy in April.
- For Berlin-based think tank, Stiftung Neue Verantwortung ([SNV](#)), Germany must become better at creating an AI ecosystem, suggesting for example that the government legislate to facilitate access to anonymised data for researchers and companies. The think tank published a [report](#) (31 May) on the issue laying out the steps needed for a German national strategy.
- According to SNV’s [analysis](#), the German government must improve conditions for entrepreneurs by facilitating easier access to functional digital infrastructure, including critical hardware necessary to develop state-of-the-art AI applications like affordable cloud computing services.