

# European Regional Bureau Newsletter



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## Internet Access

### EU: Progress being made towards European Data Economy, says Andrus Ansip

- In his latest [blog post](#), the EU's Vice-President for the Digital Single Market Andrus Ansip, highlighted the huge economic potential enabled by the free flow of data.
- In Ansip's view, data should be able to migrate easily between locations, across borders and within a single data space. By 2025, the European Commission (EC) estimates a data economy providing 5.4% of the EU's GDP.
- The Regulation on the free flow of non-personal data contributes significantly to this objective says the former Estonian Prime Minister, helping to take Europe from its situation back in 2014 when 56 different laws across 21 EU countries created data location requirements, to a situation in 2020, where Ansip estimates "there should be none".
- Vice-President Ansip also highlights how the EC updated the EU's 2013 law on public sector information to enable real-time access and easier re-use of public data, for example data-sets generated by energy and transport utilities, traffic data, geographical and weather information, general statistics, education data, or even certain library books.
- He concludes by reminding readers of the EC's targets for funding Artificial Intelligence (AI), an area that will particularly benefit from a strong data economy. The Commission hopes to enable €20 billion of investment into AI Research & Innovation by the end of 2020, and more than €20 billion per year over the next decade.

### EU: Commission gives high marks to its Net Neutrality Regulation

- The European Commission released on 30 April the results of its [study](#) on the implementation of the Open Internet access Regulation.
- The study finds that the Regulation has “significantly contributed” to a more consistent approach in the establishment and enforcement of open Internet access rules.
- The 2015 “Open Internet access” Regulation introduced uniform rules on net neutrality across the EU, ensuring equal and non-discriminatory treatment of traffic in the provision of Internet access services.
- The study also notes that certain groups of stakeholders, including Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and Content, Applications and Services Providers (CAPs) were concerned that certain provisions could hamper 5G roll-out and the development of new services, although Consumer Organisations and other Civil Society Organisations surveyed in the report, disagreed with this view, stating that 5G should not affect net neutrality.

## Trust

### Global: Privacy concerns are increasingly driving consumer choices, says ISOC

- A new Internet Society (ISOC) [survey](#) conducted finds that 73% of consumers think people using connected devices should worry about eavesdropping.
- The survey, conducted in the USA, Canada, Japan, Australia, France and the UK, highlights how privacy and security are frequently key consumer concerns and often drive buying decisions.
- According to the research, 77% of consumers consider security and privacy features as highly relevant when buying a device, and 28% of users who do not own a connected device do not do so because of security concerns.
- At least 65% of consumers have concerns about data collection procedures of connected devices. More than half (55%) think that their connected devices do not protect their privacy, and a similar figure consider devices do not handle their information responsibly.
- ISOC President and CEO Andrew Sullivan commented that these results show how IoT devices manufacturers must put privacy and security at the heart of their manufacturing procedures: “Security should not be an afterthought. It’s clear that manufacturers and retailers need to do more so that consumers can trust their IoT services”.

### EU: The EU proposes global eCommerce rules

- On Friday 3 May, the European Commission laid out its key [proposals](#) and commitments on e-commerce at the World Trade Organisation (WTO), revolving

around the enshrining of net neutrality, free data flows and basic consumer protection in WTO law.

- According to news [reports](#), the proposals were not met with enthusiasm by delegates from the United States, as the approach to online privacy between the two have clear points of disagreement.
- A senior EU official working on the negotiations stated: “I expect our transatlantic friends to say that the EU proposal falls short on the level of ambition they like to see [...] Just as I could say that on some aspects, the Japanese and US proposals don’t meet the EU’s expectations”.

### **Czech Republic: Countries disagree on approach to 5G security**

- The Czech Republic’s efforts to gather support around a text laying down principles on 5G security have finally translated into a list of non-binding “declaration of interests” called the “Prague Proposals”.
- The text was supposed to be a joint statement called the “Prague Principles” that more than 30 countries would sign at the [Prague 5G Security Conference](#) on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> May to “define non-binding recommendations on how to proceed safely with the introduction of 5G networks”. However, several countries hesitated, including France and Germany, leading the hosts to abandon the idea of a joint statement.
- Instead, the Czech Republic presented a “Chairman statement” accounting only for its own position in a paper that covered the issue through four chapters: policy-making; technology deployment; economy; and security, privacy and resilience.

### **EU: Stop using impenetrable legalese in corporate T&Cs, says Giovanni Buttarelli**

- In a [blog post](#) this week, the European Data Protection Supervisor Giovanni Buttarelli criticised the language used in the terms and conditions and privacy policies of large technology companies.
- In the blog, Mr. Buttarelli argues that privacy policies have evolved to become “either long, verbose and impenetrable legalese, or else vague and shooting PR exercises”.
- However, he also notes the fine balance needed when it comes to transparency and terms and conditions, arguing that transparency has become a “double - edged sword: provide too much information and the average person cannot be reasonably expected to read it; oversimplify it and she will have little idea of what is really going on”.

- Mr. Buttarelli argues that terms and conditions are an area where better coordination between consumer authorities and data protection authorities is needed.

#### **EU: Investigation into Amazon's use of data could be concluded before the summer**

- In a recent [interview](#) on French radio France Inter, Competition Commissioner Margrethe Vestager said the Commission's pre-probe into Amazon is "quite advanced" and the next steps could be announced "hopefully before summer".
- In September last year, the Commission announced that it had launched a preliminary competition investigation into how Amazon uses data about merchants who trade on its marketplace.
- The preliminary probe is focused on Amazon's dual role as a competitor, but also host, to third-party merchants, which sell goods on Amazon's websites.
- More than half of all sales globally on Amazon come from third-party retailers. The Commission sent questionnaires to retailers who do business with Amazon as part of a preliminary information-gathering process, and the Commission is understood to have received large volumes of data due to this request.

#### **UK: May's defence secretary fired over Huawei scandal**

- Prime Minister Theresa May has dismissed Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson, following claims he was responsible for the high-level [leak](#) of confidential discussions on the role of Huawei Technologies in Britain's 5G network supply chains.
- In a [letter](#) published earlier this week, May criticised Williamson for not cooperating with the British investigation authorities, as his conduct had "not been of the same standard as others", finally stating that she had "lost confidence" in his ability to serve as Defence Secretary.
- The incumbent has now been replaced by International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt, a close ally of Theresa May and strong Brexit supporter.