

European Media Policy



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Internet /Digital Economy

EU Parliament to Commission: Break Up Google!

In a thinly veiled threat to Google's leading position in the search market, the European Parliament recently adopted a [resolution](#) stressing the need to prevent online companies from abusing dominant positions by enforcing EU competition rules and unbundling search engines from other commercial services.

The European Parliament has no power to dismember a company. But the resolution, adopted on 27 November, puts pressure on the new EU Competition Commissioner Margrethe Vestager – who has that power – to take a tougher line than her predecessor in resolving a number of complaints against Google.

Even more so since France and Germany, on the same day, called on the EU Commission to review competition rules concerning on-line web-platforms – notably search engines such as Google – in order to create “a more level playing field” and encourage European companies in the market.

Behind the Franco-German move were maybe influential German and French publishing groups who are eager to curb Google and have formed a lobbying group called the Open Internet Project.

In the United States policymakers were not very happy about the European Parliament's resolution. Powerful members of Congress and Governor Jerry Brown of California, where Google is based, strongly condemned the initiative. Leaders of congressional trade committees warned that the vote could even imperil negotiations over a trans-Atlantic trade deal, reported *the New York Times*.

American Technology Giants in the Firing Line

The European Parliament's “attack” on Google described above shows the growing concern in Europe about the increasing power of Google and other American technology giants such as Amazon, Apple and Facebook.

In recent years accusations and revelations about these companies have been stacking up. Since 2010 the European Commission has been investigating a number of complaints against Google – which totally dominates the search market in Europe – from competitors accusing the company of promoting its own services at their expense.

The revelations in June 2013 about the US National Security Agency's surveillance of millions of people with the help of Google, Apple, Facebook, and other internet giants also caused much outrage in Europe, not least in the European Parliament.

Google's mining of users' personal data has also upset many in Europe, where protection of privacy for historical and other reasons is considered important. Reflecting such concerns was the “right to be forgotten”-ruling in May this year by the European Court of Justice requiring Google to consider individuals' request to remove links that they say infringe on their privacy.

Another issue concerning Google is the corporate taxation of digital companies, which often take advantage of EU disparities by declaring their profits in countries where taxation is lower. This has been a big issue in recent months when large multinational groups have come under the spotlight for legal arrangements aimed at minimising their tax bills.

In September the OECD recognised that there has been a particularly severe erosion of tax bases in the digital economy and proposed measures. Among the multinationals targeted are

Google, Apple and Amazon.

Nor are the American technology giants very transparent, shows a recent [report](#) from the global anti-corruption coalition Transparency International. " Surprisingly, the sector that makes greater transparency possible is one of the least transparent. US tech giants Amazon, Apple, Google and IBM all score less than three out of ten" comments the coalition.

Furthermore, Google is no favourite of the new EU Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society, Gunther Oettinger from Germany. Among other things, he seems concerned about the competitive threat to European industry posed by American technology giants. "Think of the loss of importance of Nokia and Siemens in the category of mobile devices", said the Commissioner in a New York Times article just before he took office.

Especially worrisome seems to be Google's expansion into the manufacture of goods. " It must not happen that Google makes future products such as cars or televisions and European companies are left in the role of suppliers", stressed Oettinger.

Such concerns are understandable in light of his home country's new industrial policy. At a German IT Summit in October, Oettinger's politically ally, the powerful German Chancellor Angel Merkel, made it clear that she no longer wants Europe constantly trailing behind the United States and China in this sector. "Connecting digital technologies with industrial products and logistics - Industry 4.0 - Germany has a chance at taking the lead," [Merkel declared](#).

Media / Cultural Industries

Important Changes in the EU Commission

On 1 November the new European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker and his team took office. Juncker has made some important changes in the way work is organised in the new Commission.

Vice-Presidents will henceforth be in charge of well-defined priority projects and steer and coordinate work across the Commission in the key areas of the [Political Guidelines](#). Some important persons to keep an eye on for those interested in EU media policy:

The leader of Project team: A Digital Single Market is **Andrus Ansip, Vice-President for the Digital Single Market**. Former Prime Minister of Estonia and Vice-President for the liberal ALDE-group in the European Parliament Ansip is highly qualified for his job. During his grilling in the EU Parliament MEPs were impressed by his good command of the range of policies for which he was to be responsible.

Ansip will steer and coordinate the work of a number of Commissioners on issues related to his portfolio, in particular the work of the **Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society, Gunther Oettinger** from Germany.

Oettinger heads the Commission's DG CONNECT (Directorate General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology), which now also includes important units moved from other DGs dealing with copyright, the fight against counterfeiting and piracy, online services and the MEDIA part of the Creative Europe Programme.

The new **EU Commissioner for Education and Culture** is **Tibor Navracsics** from Hungary. His nomination to the job met with much opposition, not least in the European Parliament.

As a former Justice Minister in the government of Prime Minister Viktor Orban, Navracsics was severely criticized during his hearing in Parliament for policies on education, media, judiciary and minority rights over which Budapest had clashed with the EU. For example Hungary's

restrictive media laws, which he helped put in place.

After the hearing the Committee on Culture and Education (CULT) voted that Navracsics was qualified to be a Commissioner, but not qualified to carry out the particular duties assigned to him.

In the end Navracsics got the same job anyway, after Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, as a concession, removed citizenship from his portfolio and replaced it with sport. Navracsics is, however, still responsible for education and culture.

Given the opposition to him in the EU Parliament, especially among the Greens and the left, Navracsics will most likely need to launch a big charm offensive if he wants the Parliament's cooperation on important matters.

EU Council: Time to Revise Audiovisual Media Services Directive

At their Council meeting in November EU Culture Ministers called on the Commission to "urgently complete" the review of the Audiovisual Media Service (AVMS) Directive and submit a proposal for the revision of the directive as soon as possible.

"The digital revolution has had a profound effect on the audiovisual landscape... The blurring of lines between linear and non-linear audiovisual media services raises the question as to whether existing EU legislative provisions remain appropriate", explains the Council in its [Conclusions on European Audiovisual Policy in the Digital Era](#).

The ministers agreed that the main goals of European audiovisual policy in the digital era are to:

- facilitate the supply of broad, culturally and linguistically diverse and high quality content;
- meet audience demand by ensuring easy, timely, cross-border and legal access to content, full cross-border circulation of European audiovisual works and visibility and presence of European works across all distribution platforms;
- ensure equal conditions for competitiveness for audiovisual media service providers within the single market

When carrying out the review of the AVMS Directive the Commission swas urged to pay particular attention to, among other things:

- the effectiveness of the measures for the promotion of European works, considering alternative measures suited for the digital environment;
- assess the functioning of current advertising rules;
- ensure a high level of protection of minors across all audiovisual media services

EU Commission: Quality Information Must Be Properly Funded and Remunerated

In November the right-hand of the new EU Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, First Vice-President Frans Timmermans, told a delegation from the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ) that sustaining quality journalism and putting Europe's media freedom back on track will be high on his agenda.

"Preserving reliable and quality information is an existential question for democratic societies. Such information rests on the hard work of professional journalists who investigate and find facts. This does not come 'for free', it needs to be properly funded and remunerated." said Timmermans.

“Support for professional and good quality journalism must go hand in hand with transparent media ownership in order to regain trust in the media,” added the First Vice-President. [Read more](#)

EU Copyright Rules Finally To Be Modernised?

In recent years there have been many calls for EU's copyright legislation to be updated. Now it looks like things may start to move.

Both the new EU Commission President Juncker and his Vice President for the Digital Single Market, Andrus Ansip, have stressed the need to modernise copyright rules quickly in light of the digital revolution.

Just before taking office Günther Oettinger, the EU Commissioner directly responsible for this area, announced plans to reform existing copyright laws within one year, indicating the likely addition of an EU "Google-tax",

Such a tax would require internet search engine providers to pay a fee for displaying copyrighted materials on their sites. “If Google takes intellectual property from the EU and makes use of it, the EU can protect this property and demand that Google pay for it,” Oettinger told the *Handelsblatt* newspaper.

In September the Director General of Oettinger's DG CONNECT, Robert Madelin, presented his thoughts on future work on copyright issues in an [interview](#) with the news service EurActiv, saying:

“A part which is not yet in the Juncker discourse, is text and data mining which is really huge....there is a question outstanding whether you need to move from voluntary scope for exceptions to copyright law to something more formal. In the US you have ‘fair use’ which covers text and data mining for research and even for commercial purposes, I think. In Japan, you have a specific text and data mining clause in their copyright law. And in Europe, we don't have either. So I would say these are the two areas which seem big issues in copyright from a digital perspective. ”

Copyright modernisation has also been discussed in the EU Council. In its recently adopted [Conclusions on European Audiovisual Policy in the Digital Era](#), the Council invites the EU Commission to present proposals to modernise the EU copyright framework in order to:

“facilitate on-line, legal and cross-border access to audiovisual works, foster on-line transnational circulation of audiovisual works, protect and reward authors and other rightholders, provide for a balanced framework of rights, duties and responsibilities across the value chain and improve the level of digitisation and online availability of film heritage.”

EU Council:

Use Structural Funds To Put More Cultural Heritage Online!

Hoping that the creative industries will boost the ailing European economies, the EU seems keen on putting Europe's cultural heritage - maybe its main remaining asset - to use.

In October the European Commission [published two reports](#) urging cultural institutions in Europe to put more cultural heritage online with government support. “Digitised cultural material is a great common and free resource for developing cultural and educational content, documentaries, tourism applications, games, animations and design tools. This can help creative industries to grow beyond their current share of 4% of EU's GDP”, explained the

Commission.

The Commission mentions some good examples to be inspired by, among them the [Finnish National Gallery](#), which offers and app-developer support tool; the [Danish Film Institute](#), which offers an open [film streaming platform](#) and attracted almost 200,000 users within the first two months after its launch; and [Digisam](#), which coordinates the digitization of the many heritage institutions in Sweden.

The EU Council of Ministers is paying attention to this subject too and has made cultural heritage one of the priorities of the Council's new Work Plan for Culture (2015-2018).

At the Culture Council meeting in November it [invited EU member states to](#): make better use of the possibilities offered by the EU Structural Funds to support actions in favour of the protection, digitisation and circulation of audiovisual heritage (both film and television heritage), encourage experimentation with new release strategies and channels, and "foster the innovative reuse of audiovisual heritage".

At the same meeting the Council adopted Conclusions on participatory governance of cultural heritage, inviting member states to promote a more active involvement of civil society and of the private sector in the governance of cultural heritage, at local, regional, national and European levels. [Read more](#)

No Reduced VAT Rates for E-books in Sight

The chances that e-books will benefit in Europe from the same reduced VAT tax rates as printed books look rather slim for the moment. EU Culture Ministers discussed the issue at their Council meeting in November and opinions diverged on the issue.

According to the VAT Directive, printed books are treated as "goods" to which reduced VAT rates might apply while e-books are considered as "electronic services" which don't benefit from reduced rates.

Several member states were of the view that a book is always a book, independently of its support and therefore Member States should be allowed to apply the reduced VAT rate also to e-books.

On the other hand, a number of member states considered that this is a complex issue which calls for a more cautious approach due to the unforeseeable consequences of such an approach on book policy and tax revenues.

The Commission confirmed that it was planning to address the challenge of convergence between on-line and the physical environments in the context of taxation.

To reach consensus on this issue in the EU Council is imperative. Decisions on VAT require a unanimous vote in the Council.

Commission Tries to Dispel Worries about EU-US Trade Deal

In Europe there are still apprehensions about the talks on a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership Agreement (TTIP) with regard to the audiovisual sector and the transparency of the negotiations.

In recent months the European Commission has tried to dispel such worries. In his [political guidelines](#) the new EU Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker assures that he will "not sacrifice Europe's safety, health, social and data protection standards or our cultural diversity

on the altar of free trade" and "insist on enhanced transparency towards the European Parliament" during all steps of the negotiations.

Similar pledges were made in September by the new Trade Commissioner, Sweden's Cecilia Malmström, who will be the leading EU negotiator for the TTIP agreement. In her hearing in the European Parliament she promised to find ways of communicating better with the MEPs but also with national parliaments, and first and foremost with European citizens.

In November Commissioner Malmström issued a Communication saying that more EU negotiating texts that the Commission already shares with Member States and Parliament will be made public. A list of such documents will be published and updated on a regular basis.

Furthermore, all Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), not just a select few, will be given access to TTIP texts and fewer TTIP negotiating documents will be classified as "EU restricted". [Read more](#)

These promises were welcomed by the Chair of the EU Parliament International Trade Committee (INTA), Bernd Lange. But Parliament's green light for the TTIP at the end of talks will depend on whether the EU-Commission will actually take on board the demands of MEPs and the public, he added.

Discussions in the INTA committee on this issue will probably not be dull. Among the members of the committee is French nationalist Marine Le Pen, a vociferous opponent of the TTIP.

Among those who are worried about the TTIP trade deal are the EU Ministers of Culture. They have talked about the challenges that the agreement could represent to cultural diversity at several Council meetings.

At their last meeting on 25 November the Commission reiterated that during the negotiations it had respected strictly [the mandate given by member states](#) regarding audiovisual services – i.e that these services should not be covered by the deal - and that there was no change at all since the last round.

Digital Agenda

Digital Agenda a Top Priority

The Digital Agenda is a top priority for the new EU Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker (the second of his ten priority policy areas).

In Juncker's [Political Guidelines for the next European Commission](#) he says that he intends to take, within the first six months of his mandate, "ambitious legislative steps towards a connected digital single market, notably by swiftly concluding negotiations on common European data protection rules; by adding more ambition to the ongoing reform of our telecoms rules; by modernising copyright rules in the light of the digital revolution and changed consumer behaviour; and by modernising and simplifying consumer rules for online and digital purchases. This should go hand-in-hand with efforts to boost digital skills and learning across society and to facilitate the creation of innovative start-ups."

The European Parliament seems keen on establishing a digital single market too. In November MEPs called on member states and the European Commission to break down barriers to the growth of the EU's digital single market. The digital single market could generate an additional €260 billion a year for the EU economy, as well as boosting its competitiveness, points out the [resolution](#).

It warns, however, that important challenges, such as market fragmentation, lack of

interoperability as well as regional and demographic inequalities in access to the technology, need to be tackled in order to unlock this potential.

To Learn Coding a New Must?

It's no longer enough to know how to use a computer, a smartphone and a tablet. Now we have to learn coding too.

Some German states have already introduced coding for high school students while Denmark is considering doing the same. Meanwhile, some schools in Estonia are teaching programming to pupils as young as six. And recently schools in Britain started teaching pupils how to program. For children aged five and upwards, coding is now part of the new national curriculum for computing that is being introduced this term, reports the news service EurActiv.

The EU backs the introduction of coding in schools. Last summer Commissioner for the Digital Agenda Neelie Kroes, and Youth and Education Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou, wrote a letter to the EU's 28 education ministers, urging them to give every child the opportunity to develop basic coding skills at school. During his hearing in the European Parliament Vice President for the Digital Internal Market, Andrus Ansip, too, said that coding in schools should be "mandatory".

On 11-17 October the second edition of the EU-sponsored [Code Week](#) took place, during which millions of children, parents, teachers, entrepreneurs and policy makers came together in mass events and classrooms to learn programming and related skills. The idea was to make coding more visible, demystify these skills, and bring together motivated people to learn.

Whether the elderly too will become coding wizzes remains to be seen.

Web Start-Ups Offered EU Funding Worth €80 million

European start-ups can access EU funding worth €80 million if they use an open internet platform to develop their web-based businesses. In September the European Commission announced that the money would be available for internet SMEs and entrepreneurs using FIWARE, an open-source, royalty-free platform,

More than 1,000 enterprises and app developers using FIWARE will benefit from funding of up to €150,000, the Commission said. Unlike other sources of capital for start-ups the funding is direct, meaning entrepreneurs do not have to trade equity in the company for finance.

Successful applicants will get funding, mentoring, support, coaching and networking help from the FIWARE Accelerator. The Accelerator, which selects the winning bids, is a public-private partnership and a network of European organisations. [Read more](#)

Privacy / Data Protection

"Right to be forgotten" Must Apply Worldwide

Since the [ruling](#) in May by the European Court of Justice which required Google to consider individuals' requests to remove links that they say infringe on their privacy, the search giant has taken some steps to comply with the ruling. It has, however, only been scrubbing results from the European versions of its website such as Google.de in Germany or Google.fr in France, meaning they still appear on Google.com.

This is not enough, say the European data protection authorities assembled in the Article 29 Working Party (WP29). They want Internet search engines such as Google and Microsoft's Bing

to scrub results not just in Europe but globally when people invoke their "right to be forgotten". [Read more](#)

EU Data Protection Reform Soon To Be Finalized?

In recent months many European policymakers have called for a swift adoption of the new EU data protection rules.

In September parliamentary delegations from 16 different EU member states meeting in Paris discussed the issue. In a joint declaration the parliamentarians called on European legislators to adopt the legislative package on the reform of personal data protection "by 2015".

The new EU Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker seems keen to work on this issue. In his [Political Guidelines](#) he writes:

"Data protection is a fundamental right of particular importance in the digital age. In addition to swiftly finalising the legislative work on common data protection rules within the European Union, we also need to uphold this right in our external relations"

"In view of recent mass surveillance revelations, close partners such as the United States must convince us that the current safe harbour arrangements really are safe if they want them to continue. They must also guarantee that all EU citizens have the right to enforce data protection rights in U.S. courts, whether or not they reside on U.S. soil. This will be essential for restoring trust in transatlantic relations."

A person who will work concretely with these issues is the new EU Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, Vera Jourová from the Czech Republic. She has said that her top priority will be to swiftly conclude negotiations on common European data protection rules.

Overseeing her work is the Commission Vice President for the Digital Single Market, Andrus Ansip. He, too, wants a swift conclusion to these negotiations. "I will therefore strive for the adoption of the reform package within the first six months of the mandate", he [pledged](#) before being sworn in.

The European Parliament adopted the legislative package at first reading in March 2014. Now everybody is waiting for the Council of Ministers, which has been dragging its feet on this issue, to take a stand.

Telecoms/Infrastructure

Cybersecurity Big Emerging Issue

Hacking is no longer an innocent passtime for young computer nerds. Today when the Internet is of vital importance to the economy and many other aspects of contemporary society, hacking is becoming a major threat and the security of networks and personal data an issue of much urgency. The European Commission seems aware of this.

"There are some issues currently bubbling under in 2014 which are going to become main-stream. And cybersecurity is a big one," said Robert Madelin, Director General of the EU Commission's DG Connect (Communications Networks, Content and Technology) in an [interview](#) in September.

The new EU Commissioner Andrus Ansip, Vice-President for the Digital Single Market, seems very eager to work on this issue. At his hearing in the European Parliament, Ansip [made a](#)

[commitment](#) "to foster trust of consumers and citizens and strengthen security and protection from cyber-threats; to strengthen the EU's capacity to respond to such threats; and to such end work towards the swift adoption of the proposed Directive on Network and Information security;".

On 30 October more than 200 organisations from 25 EU member states were under virtual cyber-attack in an exercise organised by the European Network of Information Security Agency (ENISA). The exercise was the first large-scale test of new pan-European standard operating procedures to share information on cyber crisis. By the end of the year ENISA will issue a report with key findings.

President Obama Calls for Net Neutrality Rules

On 10 November US President Barack Obama [called for net neutrality rules](#) that would prohibit broadband carriers from blocking online content and restrict them from giving priority access to companies that pay an extra fee.

"We cannot allow Internet service providers (ISPs) to restrict the best access or to pick winners and losers in the online marketplace for services and ideas. That is why today I am asking the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to answer the call of almost 4 million public comments, and implement the strongest possible rules to protect net neutrality "

The rules the President is asking for are, simply put:

- No blocking
- No throttling
- Increased transparency
- No paid prioritization

The latter means that no service should be stuck in a "slow lane" because it does not pay a fee, explains President Obama and asks for "an explicit ban on paid prioritization and any other restriction that has a similar effect".

Obama's recommendations "represent an important step towards real net neutrality protections globally. It is now crucial that Europe does not find itself left in the slow lane in the race for an adoption of urgently needed net neutrality rules", commented The European Digital Rights organisation (EDRI).

EU Council Postpones Decisions on Net Neutrality

The EU Council does not yet seem ready to make any decision regarding net neutrality. On November 27 the Council of Ministers discussed the issue. "Most member states considered that the presidency text was a good basis for further work but that more discussion was needed," reads the press release.

A large number of delegations said it was important to have open and non-discriminatory access to the Internet, but that it was likewise important to avoid curtailing innovation and investment. Several delegations expressed support for a Dutch proposal to ban price discrimination in any rules on net neutrality.

The presidency concluded that "talks with the European Parliament can start only when the time is ripe". The adoption of the regulation requires the approval of both the Council and the European Parliament. The Parliament adopted its first-reading amendments in April, expressing strong support for net neutrality

The European Consumer Organisation (BEUC) is clear on this issue. "Europe needs Net Neutrality to, in a nutshell, preserve the open internet, make internet operators desist from

manipulating traffic for commercial interest and prevent the evolution of a fast and slow lane internet where consumers pay premiums for high bandwidth content”, [said BEUC's Director General Monique Goyens](#).

Lamy on Use of Fought-Over 700 Mhz Spectrum Band

In January 2104 the EU Commission appointed former EU Trade Commissioner and World Trade organisation chief Pascal Lamy to lead a group of top executives from Europe's broadcasters, network operators, mobile companies and tech associations to discuss and make recommendations on how to use the UHF spectrum band (470-790 MHz) most effectively in coming decades.

Currently these frequencies are mostly dedicated to terrestrial broadcasting, but in light of the increasing consumer demand for audiovisual content on tablets, smartphones etc. mobile broadband operators are making claims on this spectrum band.

In his report - presented in early September - Pascal Lamy recommends that mobile broadband get exclusive use of the 700 Mhz band of the EU's U Ultra High frequency spectrum by 2020 (+/- 2 years). In return, terrestrial broadcasters should be guaranteed the remaining UHF spectrum below 700 Mhz (470-694 Mhz) until 2030. [Read more](#)

“This might not give broadcasters and viewers enough time to adapt to appropriate spectrum arrangements and ensure the necessary upgrade of free-to-air digital terrestrial television networks and consumer equipment”, commented a representative of the European Broadcasting Union (EBU).

The harmonization of the 700 Mhz band is planned at international level by the World Radio Conference (WRC) which will meet at the end of 2015. The EU needs to have “a smart and forward-looking strategy”, says the EU Commission.

Internet Governance

EU Policymakers Speak Up on Internet Governance Issues

An EU delegation participated in the international Internet Governance Forum in Istanbul on 2-5 September. After the meeting they reported on what they had done there in a [joint statement](#) signed by Commission Vice President Neelie Kroes and five Members of the European Parliament.

The EU policymakers say they argued “strongly” for:

- Expanded internet access globally
- Maintenance of the internet as a global, open and common resource and non-discriminatory access to knowledge
- Greater accountability and transparency in the “multi-stakeholder” internet governance model
- Rejection of the idea of a state-controlled internet/s
- A stable and secure mandate for continuation of the Internet Governance Forum (with adequate resources)
- Recognition that our fundamental freedoms and human rights are not negotiable and must be protected online.

The EU Council of Ministers, too, has been discussing internet governance. At a meeting in

November the Council adopted [Conclusions on Internet governance](#) outlining Europe's role in shaping its future.

The conclusions highlight EU support for a multi-stakeholder model for the governance of Internet, for transition of the stewardship of the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) functions regarding Internet domain names, and for strengthening ICANN's accountability and transparency.

The Council also notes the need to address the impact of possible conflicts of jurisdiction on data protection and geographical indications and to reaffirm the EU's attachment to the same fundamental rights online as offline.

IGF - Too Much Talk and Too Little Funding?

The Internet Governance Forum (IGF) currently has a mandate until 2015 and decisions about the renewal of the IGF will probably be taken by the UN General Assembly at the beginning of December this year. Many say positive things about the Forum, but often calls are heard for more tangible outcomes.

"While preserving its unique nature as a truly open platform for discussion, the IGF should not be sidelined as a mere 'talk shop'. The time is ripe to produce outcome documents, such as policy recommendations for voluntary adoption", wrote the EU Commission in a [Memo](#) outlining its position for the IGF meeting in Istanbul.

" Key to this is ensuring stable funding for the IGF", continues the Commission. Currently, the IGF relies on voluntary funding, including host-country and other in-kind contributions. The European Commission – which has been one of the main funders of the IGF Secretariat – says it is determined to secure institutional continuity for the IGF and supports the extension of the IGF mandate beyond 5-year terms.

World Economic Forum To Take Over Internet Governance?

The signs of weakness in the Internet Governance Forum seem to have attracted contenders eager to take over internet governance.

One somewhat disconcerting proposition is the [NETmundial Initiative on Internet governance cooperation](#), launched in August by the World Economic Forum (WEF), whose members comprise 1,000 of the world's top corporations, global enterprises usually with more than US\$ 5 billion in turnover.

Through close collaboration with key government, industry, academic and civil society partners, including the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), the new initiative will provide a venue for leaders from many regions and sectors of society to discuss and collaboratively address a range of emerging policy challenges related to the Internet, explains the WEF.

The civil society [Just Net Coalition](#) was appalled, rejecting out of hand the transfer of global governance prerogatives to corporate led initiatives such as the NMI, because such initiatives are not consistent with democracy. Let no one be under any illusion that this is simply about multistakeholder consultations towards policy development rather than actual policy decision in the making, warned the Coalition. [Read more](#)

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The Newsletter provides an up-date on policy developments at the European level. We concentrate on news from the European Union – current issues and trends in media policy, new proposals for legislation, debates in the European Parliament, recently taken or impending policy decisions and reactions among those concerned, new support programmes, EU studies in the field etc. There will also be some coverage of policy developments in the Council of Europe and at the international level. The newsletter will be published three times a year.