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Transport, Telecommunications and Energy

Telecommunications issues

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P R E S S

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OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

none

¹

- Where declarations, conclusions or resolutions have been formally adopted by the Council, this is indicated in the heading for the item concerned and the text is placed between quotation marks.
- Documents for which references are given in the text are available on the Council's internet site (<http://www.consilium.europa.eu>).
- Acts adopted with statements for the Council minutes which may be released to the public are indicated by an asterisk; these statements are available on the Council's internet site or may be obtained from the Press Office.

ITEMS DEBATED

Digital single market

In line with the [European Council conclusions](#) of 19 October, the Council held a policy debate on prioritising and speeding up work on the digital single market to ensure its completion by the end of 2018 ([discussion note](#)). The ministers' debate also built on the leaders' discussions at the Tallinn Digital Summit on 29 September.

Today's discussion was mainly focused on digital single market dossiers falling under the remit of telecommunications ministers, while some ministers also mentioned other issues such as geoblocking, taxation and audiovisual services and emphasised the need to improve digital skills or to monitor developments in areas such as artificial intelligence.

Ministers stressed in particular the importance of the proposals on the electronic communications code, free flow of non-personal data, cybersecurity and geoblocking for the digital economy and society. They expressed their strong commitment to delivering the objectives set by the European Council for these dossiers and for the digital single market in general.

In the area of telecommunications, the European Council had established specific deadlines for reaching an agreement with the European Parliament on three key legislative files: cross-border parcel delivery, the electronic communications code, and the free flow of non-personal data.

Agreement should be reached on the first of these – cross-border parcel delivery services – by the end of 2017. The Estonian presidency is willing to start talks with the European Parliament in early November and will make every effort to conclude them by the deadline set by EU leaders.

By June 2018, the Council and the European Parliament should have reached agreement on the electronic communications code. The first trilogue meeting with the Parliament on the code will be held tomorrow, and the presidency hopes to make solid progress in the negotiations with the Parliament on this dossier.

June 2018 is also the deadline for reaching agreement on the proposal on the free flow of non-personal data, which was presented by the Commission in September. The Council working party is already working on the proposal, and the presidency intends to advance work on this dossier as much as possible.

The presidency promised to report on concrete progress in December.

This item was taken in public session.

[Digital single market for Europe](#) (background information)

[Conclusions of the Prime Minister of Estonia, Jüri Ratas, following the Tallinn Digital Summit](#)

Cybersecurity 2.0

The Council held a policy debate on the EU's response to the crucial challenge of cybersecurity ([discussion note](#)). Work in this area is focused on the wide-ranging cybersecurity package presented by the Commission in September. Its proposals aim to build EU resilience to cyber attacks and step up the EU's cybersecurity capacity, create an effective criminal law response and strengthen international cooperation on cybersecurity.

Core elements of the package are:

- a Joint Communication on Resilience, Deterrence and Defence: Building strong cybersecurity for the EU
- a legislative proposal for a Cybersecurity Act, proposing to upgrade the current European Union Agency for Network and Information Security (ENISA) into a permanent EU Cybersecurity Agency and to create an EU-wide certification framework for ICT products and services
- a legislative proposal for a directive on combating fraud and counterfeiting of non-cash means of payment
- a blueprint outlining European-level coordinated response to large-scale cybersecurity incidents and crises.

In the debate, member states broadly welcomed the package. They stressed that the timely implementation of the directive on the security of network and information systems (NIS directive), adopted in July 2016, would remain the top priority. Several ministers described what steps had been taken to implement the directive in their countries.

As regards the new proposals, many delegations highlighted the importance of supporting cooperation between member states by means of a permanent ENISA with a broader mandate, while respecting the subsidiarity principle. They also supported the establishment of a voluntary certification framework at EU level, although several delegations pointed out that such a framework should not hamper innovation.

Many of the ministers also highlighted the need to allocate more resources to cybersecurity.

Several ministers stressed the importance of cybersecurity education and other preventive measures to improve cyber hygiene, in addition to legislation.

The Estonian presidency, together with the upcoming Bulgarian and Austrian presidencies, will elaborate an action plan for the implementation of the cybersecurity package, as requested by the European Council and envisaged in their trio presidency programme. This initiative also received wide support from the ministers.

In addition to the [conclusions of the European Council of 19 October](#), cybersecurity questions were addressed by EU leaders at the Tallinn Digital Summit, as reflected in the conclusions by the Estonian Prime Minister, Jüri Ratas.

[Cyber security](#) (Commission webpages)

[ENISA website](#)

[Conclusions of the Prime Minister of Estonia, Jüri Ratas, following the Tallinn Digital Summit](#)

Any other business

– *Practical steps to achieving next generation connectivity*

The presidency provided information on the informal lunch debate, which focused on practical steps to achieving 5G connectivity.

The presidency said that the discussion took note of the ambition on 5G expressed by last week's European Council.

The day after today's Council meeting, the presidency would hold the first trilogue with the European Parliament on the Electronic Communications Code. The following week telecoms directors would meet in Tallinn to look at how to speed up work on deployment of 5G, including a common European timeline. This timeline, along with the issues of investment and financing, would be discussed in December.

The European Council on 19 October called for 'cooperation at the EU level, inter alia with the aim of achieving world-class very high-speed fixed and mobile networks (5G) all across the EU and increased coordinated availabilities of spectrum by 2020 under consistent regulatory and economic conditions'.

This item was taken in public session.

[Presidency note on practical steps to achieving next generation connectivity](#)

– *Tallinn ministerial declaration on e-Government and the Eastern Partnership digital ministerial meeting*

The presidency briefed ministers on the Tallinn declaration on e-Government, signed by all EU and EFTA countries on 6 October 2017. It also provided information on the Eastern Partnership digital ministerial meeting held in Tallinn on 5 October 2017. That meeting endorsed a declaration that will serve as input for the Eastern Partnership summit in November.

This item was taken in public session.

[Presidency note on the declaration on e-Government and the Eastern Partnership meeting](#)

[Tallinn ministerial declaration on e-Government](#) (6 October 2017)

[Eastern Partnership ministerial meeting on the digital economy – declaration](#) (5 October 2017)

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

none
