

EN
E-004665/2011
Answer given by Mrs Kroes
on behalf of the Commission
(23.6.2011)

The Commission is aware of the newspaper article referred to by the Honourable Member which refers to telecom operators plans to introduce charges for carrying internet traffic.

It must be borne in mind that the revised telecoms framework, which is due to be transposed by the Member States by 25 May, contains some basic tools for dealing with net neutrality issues. The Commission will monitor how effectively these provisions will be used by national regulatory authority to ensure the open character of the internet.

The Commission recently published a Communication on the open internet and net neutrality in Europe following wide ranging consultation and a summit organised together with the European Parliament in 2010. In this Communication, the Commission remained committed to its objective to maintain an open internet and to ensure the maintenance of a robust best-efforts internet to which everyone has access.

The Commission will be vigilant that new EU telecoms rules on transparency, quality of service and the ability to switch operator, which are due to be transposed by the Member States by 25 May 2011, are applied in a way that ensures that these principles are respected.

Whether telecom operators should be able to charge content providers is one of a number of issues at the core of the broadband investment challenge – i.e. how best to ensure the very high levels of private-sector investment necessary for the deployment of next generation broadband networks to sustain internet growth and so meet Europe's Digital Agenda targets.

In general, the Commission looks to market players to reach solutions on the basis of a commercial agreement, where possible. Network operators and services and content providers should be allowed to explore innovative business models, leading to a more efficient use of the networks and creating new business opportunities at different levels of the internet value chain. The Commission would intervene if competition problems arise or to enforce the regulatory framework.