

**Question for written answer P-000430/2013
to the Commission
Rule 117
Sabine Verheyen (PPE)**

Subject: Preparation of Commission guidance on the Open Internet and its impact on media plurality and democracy

The Internet has become an important medium of communication given that 91 % of internet users in Europe read news online (388.5 million people)¹. This news may come from professional news outlets (e.g. a newspaper or broadcaster's site) or from comments and links posted on discussion forums, social networks or video sites.

A study by the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC) points out that the strongly market-oriented traffic management of some internet service providers (ISPs) is potentially problematic, since blocking or slowing down content from online services may be to the commercial advantage of their own services:

1. Does the Commission agree that blocking and throttling by ISPs puts European citizens' access to news at risk?
2. Does the Commission share my view that access to media and news must form part of the Commission's assessment of what constitutes 'reasonable' or 'unreasonable' traffic management and will the Commission offer guidelines as to what is 'reasonable' or 'unreasonable' in its guidance scheduled for publication in 2013?

¹ <http://www.iabeurope.eu/news/4269m-europeans-online-across-28-markets-%E2%80%A6-from-belgium-to-bulgaria-uk-to-ukraine---europeans-are-more-connected-than-ever-before.aspx>