

EN
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Answer given by Mr Breton
on behalf of the European Commission
(16.12.2022)

On 14 July 2022, the co-legislators have reached a political agreement on the ‘Path to the Digital Decade policy programme’¹. The agreed text contains a specific recital that refers to the need that ‘all market actors benefiting from the digital transformation [should] assume their social responsibilities and make a fair and proportionate contribution to the public goods, services and infrastructures, for the benefit of all Europeans’. This is in line with the European Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles that was politically agreed on 14 November 2022².

No implementation mechanism has been proposed by the Commission so far. However, it goes without saying that any such mechanism should not go against the well-established principle and rules of net neutrality. The providers of internet access services shall treat all traffic equally, which will safeguard the rights of end-users laid down in Article 3(1) of the Regulation (EU) 2015/2120³.

While the Commission welcomes the Body of European Regulators for European Communications’ (BEREC) overall views on technical electronic communications issues and upon the Commission’s request during the preparation of legislative proposals, no proposal, let alone a network fee, has been proposed so far. Furthermore, no mention was made in the Commission’s response to the 54 Members of the European Parliament about contributions ‘through additional network fees’.

The Commission is engaging in an open dialogue with all stakeholders in order to safeguard the innovation and growth of the internet ecosystem for the benefit of all Europeans. In this context, the Commission is planning to launch by early 2023 a consultation on the vision for the future of the connectivity infrastructure.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_4503 (recital 13)

² <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/digital-principles> (chapter 2 point 3b).

³ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32015R2120&from=EN>