

**Priority question for written answer P-003784/2022
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Threat to net neutrality from new fees for online services

In its reply to the letter (dated 12 July 2022) on net neutrality, signed by 54 MEPs, the Commission said it was committed to safeguarding a 'neutral' and 'open' internet. It also wrote, however, that digital players should be made to contribute to network upgrades, most probably through additional network fees levied on certain online service providers. Executive Vice-President Margrethe Vestager and Commissioner Thierry Breton take the view that these MEPs and I are 'completely misguided' in our belief that a network fee could undermine the principles of net neutrality.

1. Is the Commission considering additional fees for certain online service providers? If so, how can the internet still pass for neutral if not all online service providers are treated equally?
2. Is it considering disregarding the recommendations made by the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC), which has repeatedly said that new charges could give rise to 'various risks for the internet ecosystem', that there is no evidence of 'free-riding' on the networks, and that charges could enable telecoms operators to 'exploit [their] termination monopoly'?
3. As fees for cloud service providers are passed on to, for example, broadcasters, media companies, the games industry, public bodies and consumers, and could lead to generally higher prices, how will it be ensured that these interest groups have the same opportunities as tech and telecommunication companies to get involved in the legislative process, as in the case of the recently circulated confidential questionnaire?

Submitted: 22.11.2022