New rules for a digital single market?
Debating the future framework for Europe’s telecom networks and digital platforms

WIK Conference, 12-13 October 2015
University Foundation, 11, Rue d’Egmont, 1000 Brussels

– Programme –

Day 1
Content and applications – challenges and benefits from the evolving digital value chain

09:30 Registration & Morning Coffee

10:00-11:00 INTRODUCTION VISIONS FOR THE DIGITAL ECOSYSTEM
In May this year, the European Commission outlined the steps it is planning to take to achieve a digital single market as one of the EC’s main priorities for this term. In this session we hear about technological trends and the implications for the direction of the ICT sector. We conclude with a discussion on implications for policy-makers.

Chair and Introductory remarks: Iris Henseler-Unger, WIK
Pastora Valero, Cisco
Christoph Pennings, IDATE

11:00-12:45 SESSION I WHAT NEXT FOR NET NEUTRALITY?
European policy-makers are currently searching for a solution on rules regarding net neutrality. A key focus of debate lies around the approach to traffic management, and whether and when ‘prioritisation’ should be permitted. At the same time, WIK has conducted research into what consumers expect from net neutrality. In this session we will discuss the state of play for Europe’s net neutrality rules (and if relevant, any implementation measures). We will also discuss developments in the US following the FCC’s ruling of 12 March on net neutrality, and examine whether there are any lessons to be drawn from either side of the Atlantic.

Chair: Philippe Defraigne, Cullen International
René Arnold, WIK
Peter Eberl, European Commission
Harold Feld, Public Knowledge
Stefano Quintarelli, Member of the Italian Parliament

12:45-14:15 Lunch

14:15-15:50 SESSION II A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD – WITH WHOM, AND FOR WHAT?
The Commission has proposed in the context of the DSM to ensure a level playing field for the provision of services, but what does this mean in practice? To what extent are content and applications challenging traditional business models, and what are the implications? To what extent do different rules apply today to ‘OTTs’ vs traditional telcos or broadcasters? How should rules be changed to address anomalies?

Chair: Philippe Defraigne, Cullen International
Scott Marcus, Independent Consultant
Marc Lebourges, Orange
Theo Bertram, Google

15:50-16:20 Coffee Break

16:20-18.00 SESSION III NEW PLATFORMS – NEW BOTTLENECKS?
The DSM raises questions as to whether the development of online platforms may create new bottlenecks, especially as regards SMEs. In this session, we explore what is meant by digital platforms, potential ways in which platform owners can benefit from a ‘network effect’, challenges in switching platforms, and discuss the implications for competition policy.

Chair: Prof. Alexandre de Streel, University of Namur and CERRE
Pieter Nooren, TNO
Nicolai van Gorp, e-Conomics and Ecorys
Cornelia Kutterer, Microsoft

18:00-20:00 Cocktails
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Day 2

Competition & investment – lessons for the Review of the EU Communications Framework

09:00-09:30 INTRODUCTION
KEY QUESTIONS FOR THE REVIEW OF THE FRAMEWORK FOR ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

Introductory remarks: Iris Henseler-Unger, WIK
Anthony Whelan, European Commission

09:30-11:30 SESSION I
DOES EUROPE NEED NEW REGULATORY STRATEGIES FOR FTTH?

Europe has made progress on NGA networks, but is still far from achieving its take-up target for ultra-fast broadband at 100Mbps and above. In this session we explore the NGA outcomes achieved through different competitive and regulatory models, and discuss lessons for the review of the telecommunications framework. Would regulatory forbearance on higher speeds stimulate upgrades to FTTH? In areas where duplication is not viable, could rules encouraging competition ‘for’ the market lead to the necessary upgrades? When and where might symmetric measures play a role? Is FTTH needed at all, or will advances in G.fast technology and vectoring bring ultra-fast speeds to European consumers? Coverage is only half the picture. What role, if any, is played by wholesale access in achieving take-up of fast broadband? Are there scenarios in which wholesale access could be phased out entirely?

Chair: Martin Cave
Ilia Godlovitch, WIK
David García Indurain, Telefónica
Peter Pitsch, Intel
Wolter Lemstra, TU Delft and Aalborg University

11:30-12:00 Coffee Break

12.00-13.30 SESSION II
KEYNOTE SESSION – UPCOMING CHALLENGES FOR TELECOMMUNICATIONS POLICY

Chair: Iris Henseler-Unger, WIK
Prof Pierre Larouche, Tilburg University and CERRE

KEYNOTE Wilhelm Eschweiler, BEREC Chair 2016, Vice-President BNetzA

KEYNOTE Günther Oettinger, Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society, European Commission

13:30-14:30 Lunch

14:15-14:30 KEYNOTE Vicky Ford MEP, Chair IMCO Committee, European Parliament

14:30-16:00 SESSION III
THE RISE OF OLIGOPOLIES – MARKET REPAIR, OR CONSUMER DETERIMENT?

Economies of scale together with scarce resources such as spectrum, tend to lead to oligopolistic market structures in telecoms networks, both fixed and mobile. In recent years, trends towards further consolidation have posed challenges to competition authorities. Is consolidation needed to foster investments in infrastructure? What are the implications for consumers? Should competition policy and/or spectrum auction strategies seek to reverse these trends? And does the regulatory framework offer the right tools to address oligopolistic market structures - including duopolies - if and when these present challenges for consumers?

Chair: Peter Alexiadis, Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher
Ulrich Stumpf, WIK
Prof Frank Verboven, University of Leuven
Richard Feasey, Fronfraith/Frontier Economics
Peter Culham, Ofcom

16:00-16:30 Coffee Break
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16:30-18:00 SESSION IV CLOSING THE BROADBAND GAP – WHO SHOULD DEPLOY? WHO SHOULD PAY?
A core challenge in reaching the DAE goals is the need for widespread coverage of NGA networks. In this session we explore the role of potential actors in rural deployment as well as the means to support roll-out in uneconomic areas. To what extent have state aid policies achieved widespread NGA coverage, using which technologies and at what cost? Is there a case to amend universal service obligations? If rural deployments result in a patchwork, can this be compatible with service-based competition?

Chair: Vesa Terävä, DG Connect, European Commission
Randolf Nijsse, Communications Infrastructure Fund (CIF)
Petri Makkonen, FICORA
Tiziana Talevi, Fastweb

18:00 Conference close