Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council
Telecommunications issues
12 June in Luxembourg

The Council will start at **10.00.** The meeting will be chaired by **Anrijs Matīss**, the Latvian Minister for Transport.

The Commission will present its **digital single market strategy** adopted on 6 May. Ministers will have an opportunity to express their views on the strategy and its implementation.

Ministers are expected to adopt a general approach on a programme to help member states **modernise their administrations and provide interoperable digital services** at national and European level **(ISA²)**.

The Council is due to adopt conclusions on the transfer of the stewardship of the **Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) functions** to the multi-stakeholder community.

Ministers will look at progress on a proposal to **make public sector websites more accessible**.

Under Any other business, the Latvian Presidency will brief ministers on the state of play regarding two legislative proposals: **telecommunications single market** ("TSM", comprising roaming and open internet) and **network and information security** (NIS). The incoming Luxembourg presidency will present its work programme.

All legislative items – ISA², web accessibility, telecommunications single market, and network and information security – will be discussed in a public session.

Press conference: at the end of the Council meeting (+/-14.00).

On the sidelines of the Council:

12 June at 8.30: Minister Anrijs Matīss in collaboration with Commissioner Günther Oettinger will host an **informal ministerial breakfast meeting** to discuss the **telecommunications single market** proposal.

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[1] This note has been drawn up under the responsibility of the press office.

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1/5

Digital single market strategy

Commission Vice-President for the Digital Single Market Andrus Ansip will present **the digital single market strategy** adopted 6 May. Ministers will have an opportunity to **express their views on the strategy and its implementation**. The presidency has drawn up a discussion paper highlighting four initiatives outlined in the strategy: revision of the telecommunications rules, parcel delivery, e-privacy directive, and initiatives related to areas such the 'once-only' principle and a European Cloud.

During the discussion ministers are invited to express their views on the following questions:

- Would you agree that the strategy covers all the most important issues for completing the Digital Single Market? How do your member state's digital priorities map onto the actions outlined in the strategy?

- What are your suggestions on how to better coordinate and ensure a smooth and effective implementation of the strategy, in particular in relation to the four activities highlighted by the presidency?

Similar debates on the strategy have been held in May by ministers for culture and audiovisual affairs and competitiveness ministers. The presidency will sum up the main messages from these debates and send them to the European Council President as an input for the June European Council.

- [Digital Single Market Strategy discussion paper](#)
- [Digital Single Market Strategy](#)

Interoperability programme ISA²

The Council is expected to adopt a **general approach on a programme to help member states modernise their administrations and provide interoperable digital services at national and European level (ISA²)**. The aim is to ensure seamless electronic cross-border or cross-sector interaction between European public administrations as well as between administrations and citizens and businesses. The ISA2 programme is set to run from 2016 to 2020.

Why do we need an interoperability programme?

Support for interoperability and better coordination across all eGovernment work is essential because there is much greater mobility, both of citizens and businesses, across the Union. This requires frequent interaction electronically with member state administrations. Currently problems such as organisational complexity, outdated and cumbersome procedures, and lack of cooperation create electronic barriers. These prevent citizens and businesses from using public services efficiently and impede the smooth functioning of the internal market.

Building on the current ISA programme

ISA^2 will replace and expand on the current ISA programme, which is due to expire at the end of 2015. Actions that have received support from the ISA programme include eSignature creation and verification tools to support cross-border access to eServices for businesses, the eHealth European Interoperability Framework to bring cross-border interoperability to healthcare, and an open source software to support the European Citizens' Initiative.

The new ISA^2 programme

The financial envelope of ISA^2 for 2016-2020 is about €131 million.

The programme will support and promote, amongst other things, the assessment, improvement and re-use of existing interoperability solutions and the development of new solutions. Other actions that may receive support include those which assess the information and communications technology (ICT) implications of proposed or adopted EU legislation, or help identify legislation gaps that hamper interoperability between European administrations.

Compared to the initial Commission proposal, the presidency compromise text includes provisions to clarify the eligibility criteria for actions to be financed under the ISA^2 programme and introduces criteria to prioritise actions.

In order to be adopted, the decision will have to be approved by both the Council and the European Parliament. The Parliament has not voted its position yet.

- [Interoperability programme ISA^2 draft general approach](#)
- [ISA website](#)

Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) functions

The Council is due to **adopt conclusions on the transfer of the stewardship of the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) functions to the multi-stakeholder community**.

 IANA coordinates some of the key elements that make the Internet work, such as the Internet's naming system. It manages domain names and coordinates IP addresses and other protocol resources. ICANN (Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers) currently carries out IANA functions on behalf of the United States National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). In March 2014, NTIA announced its intention to transfer its stewardship of the IANA functions to the global multi-stakeholder community. The target date for the transition is 30 September 2015, when the current IANA functions contract with ICANN expires.

The transfer of the stewardship of IANA functions is one of the most important Internet governance related processes this year, and is likely to have significant implications on other Internet governance related processes. Since the current IANA functions contract will end soon, the Council is expected to welcome the progress achieved in the discussions so far on transfer. At the same time, in order to ensure that the final transfer proposal is properly developed, the Council is expected to

- invite the global multi-stakeholder community to make further progress

- ask for further efforts to retain the Internet as a single, open, neutral, free, and un-fragmented network

- note the possible negative impact that any unjustified delay of this process could have.

Web Accessibility

Ministers will **take stock of progress** on a proposal to **make public sector websites more accessible**. Under the draft directive, EU-standardised accessibility features would become mandatory for certain types of public sector bodies' websites. Member states would be free to apply the requirements to other types of public sector websites not covered by the directive.

A report prepared by the presidency sets out the work accomplished thus far in the Council working party.

- Web accessibility progress report for the 12 June Council

Better business conditions and easier web use

A harmonised set of accessibility rules will help website developers to offer their products and services across the EU without extra production costs and other difficulties resulting from different national approaches in the sector. This should improve the functioning of the internal market and contribute to growth and competitiveness.

Certain principles and techniques that make web content more usable are to be applied when creating websites. This will benefit all users, especially people with disabilities, older people and those with temporary disabilities.

Moreover, it is particularly important for the public sector to make its websites more accessible so that they can extend their reach and fulfil their public tasks.

Accessibility standards

In February 2014, the European standardisation bodies adopted a European standard for assessing conformity with web accessibility requirements. This European standard EN 301549 contains the requirements of the international Web Content Accessibility Guidelines WCAG 2.0 AA that are currently used by stakeholders worldwide. The delayed adoption of this standard hampered progress on the draft directive for a time but the standard has now been included in the text. In the meantime, most member states have developed national web accessibility policies and standards, broadly based on similar requirements.

Work in the Council

Discussions under the Latvian presidency have mainly focused on the scope of the new rules. The Commission proposal only covered website-based online services provided by public sector bodies, but delegations have expressed support for covering a large part of public sector bodies' websites and their content. It has been suggested to exclude some types of content, such as archived documents not embedded in a webpage, and content in video and audio format. Small organisations' websites and those with a small number of visits could be excluded, too. However, more work needs to be done to finalise the draft rules on scope.

Deadlines for the application of the directive have been extended to give enough time for public sector bodies to amend their websites. There would be two application dates: one for new websites that were not published before the transposition date, and another, longer one, for websites existing at that time.

To be adopted, the directive has to be approved by both the Council and the European Parliament. The Parliament adopted its first-reading position in February 2014.

- Web accessibility: Commission proposal
- Digital Agenda for Europe: Web accessibility

<u>Other business</u>

- Proposal for a directive concerning measures to ensure a high common level of network and information security across the Union (NIS)
  Information from the presidency

- Proposal for a regulation laying down measures concerning the European single market for electronic communications and to achieve a Connected Continent, and amending directives 2002/20/EC, 2002/21/EC and 2002/22/EC and regulations (EC) No 1211/2009 and (EU) No 531/2012
  Information from the presidency on the state of play

- Work programme of the incoming Presidency
  Information from the Luxembourg delegation

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