

EU leadership in digital services: telcos call for fostering consumer choice with the EECC

Brussels, 27 February 2018 – Communications, banking, search and many other consumer services are today being delivered digitally. As competition in the online services industry becomes a key political issue, ETNO – the Association representing Europe’s leading telcos, called on EU legislators to ensure that service regulation in the Electronic Communications Code (EECC) leads to greater consumer choice and more innovation.

Digital services are today offered across an array of apps, platforms and networks, but expansion of innovation and consumer choice in Europe’s telecoms industry is frustrated by sector-specific rules. What is more, this is happening at a time when technological evolution is blurring the boundaries among industries and creating unprecedented growth opportunities in fields such as Internet-of-Things (IoT) or connected and automated driving.

As the EU institutions advance their negotiations on service regulation in the EECC, we call on legislators to:

- **Vouch for increased EU integration**, by adopting full harmonisation and rejecting exceedingly broad exemption clauses that would increase fragmentation in the single market;
- **Support IoT innovation**, by excluding M2M services from the scope of service regulation and ensuring that transmission services consisting in conveyance of signal are affected only as long as they are offered as standalone service to consumers;
- **Ensure consistent consumer protection standards and expanded consumer choice** by applying same rules for same services, taking a functional approach that reflects the consumer perspective and hence expands opportunities for competition in the services market;
- **Ensure customers keep enjoying the best deals**, by allowing more flexibility to modify contracts as technologies evolve and avoiding overly burdensome new rules for innovative and popular offers such as bundles, which are currently chosen by the overwhelming majority of EU consumers (see [IPSOS](#), 2017).

In this scenario, it is crucial to continue favouring competition over regulation in all fields and refrain from price regulation of intra-EU calls, which would distort markets. As recognized by [BEREC yesterday](#), online services and telco solutions make the market dynamic, keeping competitive pressure high. This should feed into a thorough market assessment.

Lise Fuhr, ETNO Director General, commented: *“Telcos can bring more competition and choice to Europe’s digital markets. The EECC is a unique opportunity to leave the sectorial view of regulation behind and be concrete about supporting European innovation”*.