## PRESS RELEASE : Will the European Parliament safeguard the openness of Internet?

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The Industry, Research and Energy Committee (ITRE) took a vote today on the Commission's proposal on the [European Single Market for Electronic Communications](). This is a crucial step towards the adoption of a new framework for the regulation of traffic on the Internet, by setting out European rules on network neutrality. We regret that the compromise amendments proposed by MEP Pilar del Castillo were adopted as we fear that they do not provide sufficient safeguards for the continued openness of the Internet.

While the original text was flawed, the aforementioned amendments, if voted for in the Parliament plenary and approved by the Council, would not set out a clear enough distinction between so-called 'specialised services' and the Open Internet. Under this new framework, we are concerned that internet access providers will be allowed to act as gatekeepers by picking the winners and losers among content, service and application providers, based on commercial agreements. This would directly result in hindering of open innovation and competition in electronic communications and be detrimental to Internet's users. As [research indicates](), we need to guarantee that investment continues to be made in the 'open' part of the network in order to avoid a 'dirt road' effect whereby 'specialised services' would become the norm rather than the exception.

The next stages in the European Parliament plenary and then the Council, offer an opportunity to correct some of these shortcomings. "We need to make sure that the 25th anniversary of the World Wide Web, celebrated last week, was not also its last", said Mael Brunet, Director of Openforum Europe. The concept of the Internet as a non-hierarchical, open and decentralised space is being undermined fundamentally in this moment. The Internet must remain open and a level-playing field for its stakeholders, as intended initially by its founders. At a past OFE Summit Vint Cerf, widely recognised as the father of the Internet, eloquently and simply summarised the choice "If it's not Open then its not the Internet". The vote today is a step backwards in the advancement of all that the Internet supports.

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