

Prague, 25 June 2015

Public Service Media leaders call on European leaders to urgently adopt clear and strong net neutrality rules

Declaration by the 74th General Assembly of the EBU

An open, transparent and secure Internet is crucial. Its open nature provides users unfettered and equal access to content, applications and services in a non-discriminatory manner, and enables content and applications industry to reach out to users without any third party restrictions. It is crucial that citizens can easily access content offering public value.

With Internet access providers in control of network distribution and in a position to create walled gardens from content production to the user interface, it is crucial to prevent them from abusing their gatekeeper power.

Now is the time to set out clear and strong net neutrality rules. It will strengthen freedom of expression and ensure pluralism, foster knowledge for citizens, leverage incentives for Europe's creative industries, serve the economy and boost innovation.

As discussions continue on net neutrality at EU level, we urge governments to make history by setting out the regulatory basis for the open Internet of the future in the Telecoms Single Market Regulation. It is the first essential step towards a true digital single market.

Clear EU-level rules are the best way to create the legal certainty for sustained investment in innovative online content and applications. Strong rules will secure freedom of expression and communication for the future of the digital age, enshrining the right to impart information and ideas of all kinds through any media regardless of frontiers.

- A clearly stated non-discrimination principle for Internet access providers should form the cornerstone of net neutrality. Content, services, applications or devices should neither be prioritized nor discriminated against. The open Internet should be the norm.
- Internet access providers should only be able to offer "specialised services" provided that they do not degrade or impair Internet access services.
- The rules should only allow Internet access providers to manage traffic when justified in specific, well-defined cases. Regulators must benefit from a robust set of tools to safeguard the open Internet.
- Transparent traffic management practices are essential for citizens.
