

**Broadband and the EU Action in the
Recovery Plan**

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Citizens Rights in Internet

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BEUC - the European Consumers' Organisation

BEUC and Altroconsumo

- For those who might not know BEUC, we are the European consumers' organisation and we represent 41 independent national consumer organisations in 30 European countries
- Altroconsumo is the Italian member of BEUC, with more than 300.000 associated consumers is the most representative consumers' organisation in Italy
- Since November 2008 Altroconsumo with its President Paolo Martinello holds the Presidency of BEUC



Enforce consumers' digital rights in a democratic and open Internet

- Respect the fundamental principles of openness, interoperability and net neutrality
- Find new solutions that balances the different interests of copyright holders and consumers in a digital market. We are against the French shaped graduated response, filtering and deep pocket inspection. Collective societies nationally based risk to be a barrier to the development of a legal internal market for online creative contents, levies are an obsolete instrument in a digital era
- More transparency in data collection activities and enforcement of existing data protection legislation for what it concerns targeting and behavioral advertising

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Net Neutrality

- The Internet has proven to be the greatest engine of economic growth and democratic communication in modern memory.
- The revolution brought by Internet did not happen by accident; it happened because everyone could contribute, develop their own program or service and make it available. It happened because of Net Neutrality. This is now in danger.
- Internet Service Providers, telecom operators and content providers are increasingly cooperating so that they are technically capable of limiting or prioritising access to content, to services or to applications – thus deciding on the type of content users can access. There is a growing risk that consumers have less choice and there can be less innovation.
- We are against a walled garden vertical integration model

Net neutrality is much more than an economic debate

- Many consumers are not aware that an Internet Service Provider can block their access to certain websites. Only 3 to 10% of the online consumers have received information on how their Internet Service Provider manages access to content, applications and services.
- If consumers are not able to access an Internet site, most of the time blame this on the site itself, and not on the Internet Service Provider
- Net neutrality is more than an economic debate, it is about how knowledge is diffused, used and produced again, freedom of expression and democratic participation are at stake
- Competition alone will not be enough to regulate the market, the control of the Internet and net neutrality are issues too important to take chances on.

We urge legislators to keep the principle of net neutrality

- European Parliament, Commission and the Council are at this precise moment holding informal Trialogue discussions on the third Telecom Package.
- We urge them to keep the principle of “net neutrality” in the final text, ensuring that consumers will still have access to an open Internet being able to choose their own content, application and services online – this right needs to be enforced by national telecom regulators.

What BEUC suggests

- In a neutral Internet, the following principles should apply:
- Consumers should be able to attach all devices of their choice,
- Consumers should be able to access or provide content, services and applications of their own, and
- Consumers should have their access free from discrimination according to source, destination, content or type of application.
- This implies that Internet Service Providers and communication networks should:
 - not unfairly block,
 - not degrade access,
 - not prioritize data according to source or destination, and
 - not discriminate against particular providers of content, applications, services or devices.

The Internet wants to be neutral !

Thank you for your kind attention

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