

Press release – The Netherlands first country in Europe to launch net neutrality

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Amsterdam, June 22nd - A broad majority in the Dutch parliament voted for a legislative proposal to safeguard an open Internet in The Netherlands. The proposal prohibits Internet access providers from restricting or charging end-users for specific services. The Netherlands is the first country in Europe to launch net neutrality provisions in parliament. Digital rights movement Bits of Freedom calls upon other countries to follow the Dutch example.

Crucial for freedom of choice and innovation

Dutch digital rights movement Bits of Freedom calls the proposal "a crucial foundation for Internet freedom". Director Ot van Daalen: "Net neutrality leads to greater freedom of choice and autonomy of the Internet user. This results in lower communication costs for consumers and fair chances for innovative companies. With this proposal the Dutch Parliament places itself at the forefront of Internet freedom. We call on other countries to follow this example."

Net neutrality

Net neutrality means that Internet service providers may not discriminate between different kinds of applications and content online. Dutch telecom incumbent KPN recently received world-wide media-attention because of it plans to charge Internet users for the use of innovative and competitive services such as Internet telephony. The legislative proposal aims to prevent this, while still allowing for measures in case of congestion and for network security, as long as these measures serve end-user interests.

Vote for filtering by accident

The vote was to be held yesterday. But the Dutch Labour party voted by accident for an exception on net neutrality that allows filtering on ideological grounds. This error will be corrected next week. The bill will be presented to the Senate and the law is hoped to enter into force before the end of the year.

For further information (not for publication)

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