

What does the Digital Networks Act mean for end users?



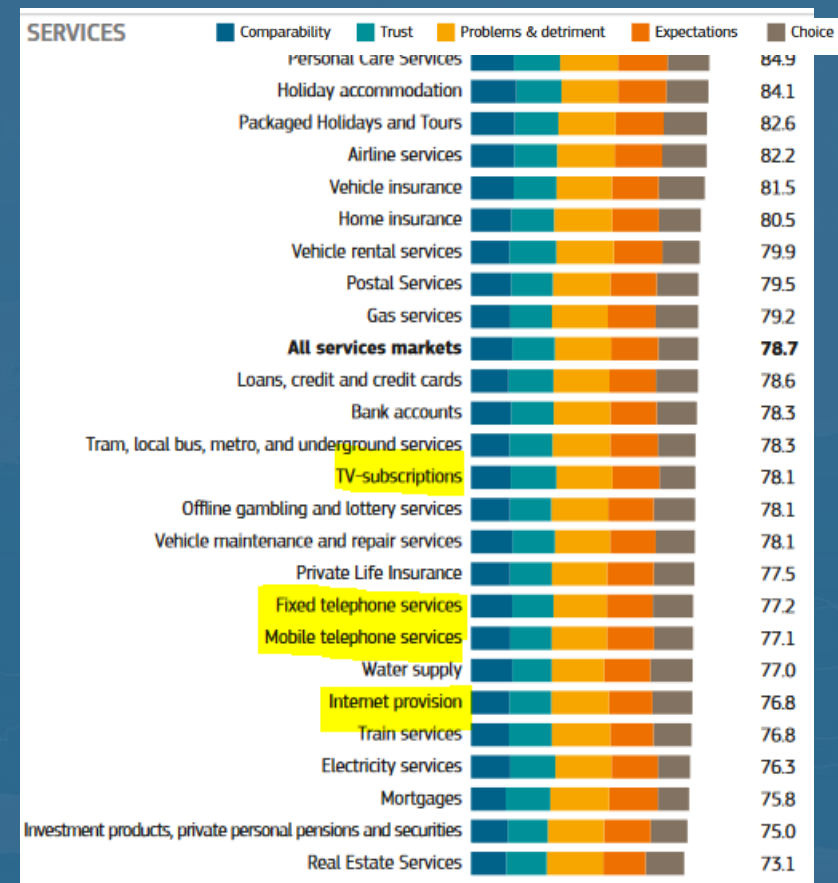
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A reminder – why do we need end-user rights in telecoms?

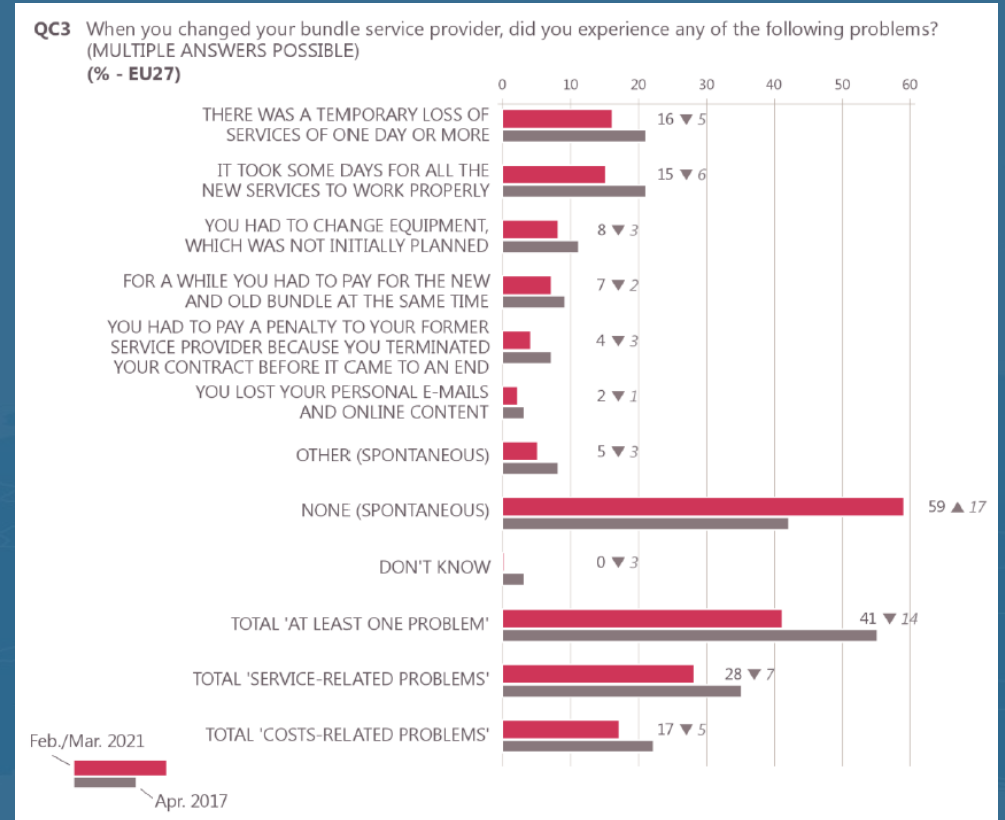
Telecoms was one of the worst performing services markets for consumers

- Four worst-performing services markets
- Highest proportion of consumers experiencing problems (16.9%)
- Highest percentage of consumer complaints (85.3% complain when experiencing problems)



How has regulation improved things?

- After the introduction of the EECC satisfaction levels have increased
- 2/3 of consumers are satisfied with internet download speeds
- Trends are shifting – less fixed telephony, more bundles, switching rates are low



Source: Special Eurobarometer – E-Communications in the Single Market

What are some potential risks for end users?

- Reduced competition through market consolidation
- Price increases driven by local monopolies
- Deteriorating quality of service
- Lack of investment and slow deployment of networks in remote areas
- Entrenching the digital divide

End user rights in the DNA

- Incorporates majority of end user provisions from the European Electronic Communications Code (EECC)
- On the surface it seems to codify the EECC, however...
- Full harmonisation risks winding back Member State provisions protecting consumers
 - E.g. Germany
- Industry is pushing back against sector specific protections

What do we need to protect?

- **No loss of acquired rights and protections for consumers:** full harmonisation must not compromise higher levels of consumer protection
- **Strengthened rules:** on information and transparency requirements and provider switching, in particular on early contract termination, and for fibre connections.
- **Enforcement is key:** effective implementation of new rules must be overseen by national regulators.
- **Redress must be available:** Consumers need effective complaint procedures and civil law remedies allowing to seek redress.



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