

## Netherlands passes Europe's first net neutrality legislation

Amendments approved by the senate of the Netherlands limit the ability of internet service providers to block or slow down applications and services on the internet, writes Graham Reynolds.



On 8 May 2012 the senate of the Netherlands approved amendments to its Telecommunications Act (unofficial translation [here](#)) making the Netherlands the first European country (and the second country in the world, [after Chile](#)) to pass net neutrality legislation.

The amendments passed on 8 May 2012 prevent internet service providers from blocking, hindering, or slowing down applications and services on the internet, save in specific circumstances such as to give effect to a court order or to preserve the integrity and security of the network. In addition to providing for net neutrality, the amendments also restrict the situations in which ISPs can disconnect or wiretap their users.

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[It has been reported](#) that the amendments were proposed in response to a plan, suggested by the Dutch telecommunications company KPN, “to make mobile users pay extra for data used by certain third-party apps, such as WhatsApp and Skype, that replaced KPN services like text messaging and voice calls”.

Dutch digital rights organisation [Bits of Freedom](#), which advocated for these amendments, [considers](#) their passage “a historical moment for internet freedom in The Netherlands and calls upon other countries to follow the Dutch example”.

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Published on: July 9, 2012