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ECIPE PRESS RELEASE — NEW POLICY BRIEF

Open RAN: The Technology, its Politics and Europe's response

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Brussels, Belgium, 20th October 2020 - The new policy brief by ECIPE director, Hosuk Lee-Makiyama, with Florian Forsthuber, explores the increasing politicisation of the 5G rollout around the world. In particular, the radio access networks (RAN) that make up the radio installations in the field (and the majority of the hardware costs) are the centre of a political discussion.

Exclusions of foreign vendors in China, Europe, the US, Japan and many other places, raises concerns about higher costs due to an increasing market concentration amongst equipment vendors. Here is where some see "Open RAN" as a potential solution to these concerns: By combining existing technologies (like virtualisation, AI and PC-parts), the proponents of the Open RAN concept promises to slash costs.

This policy brief explains the industrial policy implications of Open RAN for Europe. It concludes the new concept Open RAN introduces different kind of security risks than high-risk vendors, while it is yet inconclusive whether it actually cuts costs. Moreover, EU industrial policy needs to address potential foreign government interventions, from both east and west.

Publication details:

Open RAN: The Technology, its Politics and Europe's response, ECIPE Policy Brief No. 8/2020

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