DSM review: final push needed to fully achieve ambitions

BRUSSELS (May 10, 2017) – At the midpoint of this 2014-2019 European Commission, DIGITALEUROPE finds that progress towards making the Digital Single Market (DSM) a reality for all Europeans is mixed. However DIGITALEUROPE remains a committed partner supporting the Commission in their ambitions to align digital development and growth in Europe and welcomes the three new focus areas.

DIGITALEUROPE agrees with the overall DSM objectives. "The single market is key for the growth and digitalisation of Europe, and we agree that it is also the responsibility of Member States to deliver the vision of the DSM once legislation is adopted and actively contribute to tearing down barriers within the single market. We advocate for the Commission to be more focused on the alignment in implementation phase already at the start of a policy making process. If new European regulations are implemented differently in each country, there is a risk that they become just another barrier for companies to grow and trade inside Europe," said DIGITALEUROPE Director General Cecilia Bonefeld-Dahl.

DIGITALEUROPE welcomes moves by the Commission to foster digitisation in the public sector and is looking forward to further initiatives in health care, where the role and implementation of big data are essential for proper take up, notably in cross-border aspects.

"We strongly support the Commission's intention to prepare a legislative proposal for the free flow of data within the EU, continued Ms Bonefeld-Dahl. "DIGITALEUROPE welcomes the Commission taking a more global approach to fostering the free flow of data with high levels of personal data protection. The EU holds the biggest share in global trade in ICT-related services. We need to scale up and extend the objectives of the DSM to trade agreements. Without data flows, there's simply no trade in a digital world."

If the EU does not maintain a strong lead and push harder for broader development of digitally skilled workers, there will not be enough to fill existing gaps. We urge that the Commission take the necessary lead in developing the digital skills in the educational system in Europe.

Similarly, there must be enhanced support, linked to policy priorities and going beyond the Digitalizing European Industry initiative, for ICT research and innovation, especially through recognising the valuable contribution of public-private partnerships under Horizon 2020.

Cybersecurity is important. However the approach must be centered on better security practices to defeat evolving threats in a global landscape rather than only on building European capabilities. Rather than promoting security certification and labeling, it would be better investing in additional resources for ENISA, as well as encouraging public-private partnerships to develop industry-led solutions and standards.

"We are concerned about the Commission pushing for the European Parliament and Council to adopt the ePrivacy Regulation despite widespread misgivings that overlaps with the requirements of the GDPR and the NIS Directive will prove a source of confusion for businesses and consumers alike," added Ms Bonefeld-Dahl. "Typical of the issues facing our industry is the unwelcome inclusion within the scope of the ePrivacy Regulation of IoT and M2M communications."

DIGITALEUROPE wish to express concerns on possible reopening of the eCommerce Directive, which guarantees the limited responsibility of online platforms including cloud computing services hosting content. We support the objective of the proposed rules to boost eCommerce in Europe, however only if it means full harmonisation at the EU level. Also we have concerns that last December's Copyright Communication covered private copying levies, but the sort of action we want in that area is no longer under consideration.

In the field of data access or liability in the context of IoT, we rely on the existing framework as well as contractual freedom and hence firmly oppose any new rules. We are therefore reassured that the Commission is not making any precise proposals, but the vagueness of references to future liability rules for "data intensive products" is a concern and we are looking forward working with the Commission on this.

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ABOUT DIGITALEUROPE

DIGITALEUROPE represents the digital technology industry in Europe. Our members include some of the world's largest IT, telecoms and consumer electronics companies and national associations from every part of Europe. DIGITALEUROPE wants European businesses and citizens to benefit fully from digital technologies and for Europe to grow, attract and sustain the world's best digital technology companies.

DIGITALEUROPE ensures industry participation in the development and implementation of EU policies. DIGITALEUROPE's members include in total 2500 ICT Companies in Europe represented by 61 corporate members and 37 national trade associations from across Europe. Our website provides further information on our recent news and activities: http://www.digitaleurope.org

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