

Geoblocking: Consumer trust starts with business trust

BRUSSELS (April 25th 2017) - DIGITALEUROPE welcomes the draft report adopted today by the European Parliament Committee on Internal Market and Consumer Protection on Geo-blocking. The approach taken constitutes a step in the right direction.

We welcome in particular the efforts made by Members of the European Parliament to clarify the rules around applicable law.

“Businesses need legal clarity if they are going to engage in cross-border activities,” insisted DIGITALEUROPE Director General Cecilia Bonefeld-Dahl. “Business trust is a prerequisite for building consumer trust in online purchases.”

Also, this legislation is not appropriate for regulating B2B relations and the Committee was right to focus the rules on relationships with consumers, for whom this Regulation is designed.

We, however, remain very concerned by the inclusion of copyrighted content in the scope of the rules.

“Including copyrighted content places a disproportionate burden on service providers,” continued Ms Bonefeld-Dahl. “They would be expected to assess on every piece of content in their catalogue if they have the required rights in the consumers market. We need to avoid a potential flood of disclosures that would simply lead to a disruptive and negative consumer experience.”

Beyond frustration and confusion, people are unable to buy certain content, the inclusion of copyright could translate into a de facto circumvention of copyright territoriality, leaving it unclear which rights holder the service provider would need to pay. Moreover, such an inclusion would ultimately lead to a price harmonisation upwards to the detriment of economically weaker regions. As well as evidently contrary to consumer interests, making content more expensive, this would also put service providers at a significant competitive disadvantage against piracy.

DIGITALEUROPE looks forward to keeping working with EU institutions in the next steps of the process to put in place rules that would be beneficial for both consumers and businesses.

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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 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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