DIGITALEUROPE welcomes ITRE's vote on the European Electronic Communications Code

Brussels, 03 October 2017

BRUSSELS (03 October 2017) – DIGITALEUROPE welcomes last evening vote in the European Parliament's Industry, Research and Energy Committee (ITRE) on the European Electronic Communications Code (EECC). This legislation will be the cornerstone of a Gigabit Society and 5G-ready Europe. It will strengthen infrastructure-based competition and investment; secure a harmonized approach to spectrum; and foster innovation in electronic communication services.

"*Europe desperately needs high-quality, reliable and ubiquitous connectivity now*" said Cecilia Bonefeld-Dahl, Director-General of DIGITALEUROPE. *"Over 85% of Europeans use the internet every day, and mobile data grew by over 52% in Europe in 2016. In addition, companies of all sizes and from all sectors are getting digitized and wide-scale IoT networks are transforming entire sectors of the economy, such as agriculture, energy, transport and industry"*, she stressed.

DIGITALEUROPE is therefore concerned to see the Parliament's weakening of the co-investment provision. While we appreciate the provision as such is maintained, making it optional, risks making it ineffective in practice - thereby preserving a status quo where connectivity and network deployment in Europe remains fragmented.

DIGITALEUROPE on the other hand strongly welcomes that the Parliament has taken several steps forward regarding spectrum management, and has recognized and reinforced these important elements in the EECC. We welcome the EP support for 25-year license durations and a transparent review process. We also welcome a mandatory peer exchange of views between the relevant national spectrum agencies to ensure a more harmonised and transparent licensing framework.

Connectivity, 5G and digitalisation of society and businesses urgently requires transparency and certainty regarding spectrum availability. License durations must be long enough to guarantee investment and technology deployment. It is also necessary to move toward transparent licensing processes and predictable renewal conditions, as well as more coordination between Members States on spectrum release.

We also welcome the changes to the services regulation, strengthening the full harmonisation principle and introducing a main establishment element approach for general authorisations for cross-border services. This is crucial if we want an innovation-friendly EECC that fosters pan-European digital services. Finally, we support the changes to the consumer protection rules making sure they only apply where necessary and that the provisions are effectively framed to consumer contracts only. We strongly urge Member States to follow the European Parliament lead in implementing this consistent B2C and B2B distinction.

DIGITALEUROPE calls for all the above-mentioned positive elements to be taken forward in the upcoming trilogue negotiations. More coordination is desperately needed to ensure that Europe is ready to take a leading role in the digital society.

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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 25,000 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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