Leading Voices of Europe's Digital Economy Call on European Commission to Deliver Economic Promise of the Digital Single Market

techUK, Syntec Numerique and Bitkom highlight interconnected nature of digital economies in post-Brexit world

Tuesday 06 September 2016: The leading tech bodies in the UK, France and Germany are calling on the European Commission to deliver the economic promise of Digital Single Market. It is in the clear interests of UK and European consumers and businesses alike to achieve an effective Digital Single Market that is future-focused and biased towards innovation.

techUK, Syntec Numerique and Bitkom today join in voicing concerns that current proposals are straying from this objective in too many areas. Recent proposals have been overly proscriptive and fail to embrace benefits of the digital revolution. In July 2015, techUK, Syntec Numerique and Bitkom, who collectively represent over 5000 tech companies employing over 1.9 million people, launched eight principles to accelerate a Digital Single Market for jobs and inclusive growth. techUK, Syntec Numerique and Bitkom urge policymakers to now use these principles to get these proposals back on track to deliver the best economic news and prosperity across Europe post-Brexit.

Regardless of the UK's future relationship with the EU, techUK, Syntec Numerique and Bitkom call on policymakers to prioritise trade, data flows, innovation and collaboration as they move forward with the Digital Single Market strategy.

Building on a shared vision for the Digital Single Market

Since its launch the Digital Single Market initiative has advanced, but more remains to be done to capture the benefits of a truly single market that supports innovation and job creation.

At present, the Commission risks veering off track in a number of areas, including the duplication of new data rules in the review of the ePrivacy Directive and worrying proposals to undermine the freedom to hyperlink through new forms of ancillary copyright. This direction of travel, due for finalisation over the coming months, is anti-innovation and risk harming rather than supporting the digital economy. The three organisations also encourage a future-proofed telecoms framework that delivers fair competition and suitable consumer protections.

Similarly, the Commission must recognise platform companies as engines of growth and resist protectionist instincts on cross-border data flows. The three organisations caution the Commission to understand the implications of introducing sweeping new legal concepts, such as data ownership, that could risk destabilising Europe's potential in the digital economy. Data and trade go hand in hand in today's global economy, and data-driven innovation is only possible where many types of data can flow securely and freely across borders.

Dr. Bernhard Rohleder, CEO of Bitkom commented:

"Today, we reiterate our call to policymakers to deliver a Digital Single Market that embraces change, and makes it easier not harder for businesses to innovate. The future success of our three digital economies will depend on delivering a simpler not complex regulatory environment. At present, there are worrying signs that the Commission is heading in the wrong direction."

Julian David, CEO of techUK added:

"The tech communities across our three countries are deeply committed to achieving a positive and smooth transition as the UK changes the nature of its relationship with the European Union. Digital commerce between our three countries will be fundamental as the UK forges its new future after the referendum. Challenges and opportunities lie ahead on all sides, but together we can ensure our close economic ties continue to grow for the benefit of all our economies."

Laurent Baudart, CEO of Syntec Numerique said:

"Trade between our three countries underpins a robust and complex digital value chain that goes beyond national borders. The Digital Single Market is the key to deepening this relationship and we urge policymakers across Europe to continue to keep our joint principles front of mind."

Julian David, CEO of techUK, concluded:

"Tech and digital innovations are the best economic news on the continent, driving job creation and spurring greater productivity. The European Commission and Council must not allow politics and short-term uncertainty to destabilise the positive future for Europe's digital economies."

Notes to editor:

techUK (2015). techUK, Syntec Numerique and Bitkom set out Principles for the Digital Single Market. Retrieved from: https://www.techuk.org/insights/news/item/5128-techuk-syntec-numerique-bitkom-set-out-principles-for-digital-single-market

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