

JOINT LETTER ON THE DIGITAL SINGLE MARKET

28.05.2010

Dear colleagues,

We will meet on 17 June to set the groundwork to improve Europe's competitiveness. We look forward to finalising the Europe 2020 strategy. Our overall targets are set, and we are in the process of identifying the main bottlenecks hampering our growth and creation of new jobs.

Growth and productivity are to a large extent the result of the use of information and communication technologies. The Digital Agenda is a crucial project for Europe's prosperity, which should be implemented with a sense of urgency and ambition. The Commission's recent communication on the Digital Agenda is a welcome basis for this work.

In the digital space the EU functions as 27 separate markets. This is the underlying reason why all the leading companies in the field (Amazon, Google) are American, not European. The problem is not the quality of national legislation, but the simple burden of having numerous different rulebooks. We believe that progress should be made in securing transparency and easy and efficient copyright management for the whole EU-market. Consumer policy should facilitate and encourage electronic commerce. Legislation on electronic commerce needs to be modernised and public sector information should be made freely available by 2015 to encourage new businesses that thrive on its use.

The Internal Market remains a core achievement of the Union – a strong single market of 500 million people is the foundation of its economic strength. This market, however, does not function in the digital space.

We need a new approach – a framework where companies and consumers are free to operate in the digital market place throughout the Union. Only then can we grasp the full benefits of the digital century and assume leadership in the global digital economy. By extending the main principles governing our internal market to the economic activities that take place in the digital space, we can achieve the goals we have set in the framework of the 2020 strategy.

We call for the June European Council to make a strong commitment to create a truly single and secure digital market for European consumers and providers, where services (both public and private) and goods can move freely in digital space. This should be reflected in the conclusions as a comprehensive program that includes all relevant policies together with an ambitious time-table for its realization.

Lars Løkke RASMUSSEN
Prime Minister of Denmark

Andrus ANSIP
Prime Minister of Estonia

Matti VANHANEN
Prime Minister of Finland

Jan Peter BALKENENDE
Prime Minister of the Netherlands