

ECTA CEOs welcome the Digital Single Market Strategy

What ambition for Europe's Digital Single Market?

To be the best of the best: high speeds, affordability, innovation and real choice for all Europeans delivered by competition

ECTA CEOs welcome the Digital Single Market Strategy and congratulate Vice President Ansip and the Commission to its adoption. We share the vision of the Commission that high performance digital highways provide the backbone of a digital economy and society, delivered by a well-functioning and competitive telecoms market at affordable prices. Effective competition is a key driver of network investments and is indispensable to the deployment of new networks as well as ensuring high speeds, real choice, better quality and affordable prices to all European consumers and businesses. Challenger operators are ready to contribute this European vision.

What ambition and roadmap to achieving a connected Digital Single Market?

Europe should have a high level of ambition in building a globally competitive economy and society: to be the best of the best. **All European consumers and businesses should have access to next generation digital highways** and receive high speed services. **But the mere availability of high speed Internet is not enough. High speed Internet should connect every household and business. This will only happen if it comes at affordable prices with real choice of providers and attractive, innovative services.**

Competition is known and proven to be the best way to deliver affordability, choice and innovation. Competition has driven Europe to be the best of the best in basic broadband driving universal coverage and high take-up.

Ensuring vibrant competition is the single most important factor for Europe to become the best of the best in next generation broadband. European digital policy should actively promote competition not merely preserve it. It should reward efficient and competitive investments, 'beat the speed' behaviour and agility. **Regulation should enable newcomers to challenge incumbents and declare zero tolerance for monopolies or duopolies, be they old or new.**

Regulatory reform should focus on outdated or non-performing rules and strengthen pro-competitive principles that are delivering for the EU's economy and society today.

In a pro-competitive regulatory environment that enables all players – small and big – to invest, compete and innovate, the EU will see approximately 80% new fibre coverage by 2020¹.

¹ Including FTTC and FTTB/FTTH. Estimate based on listed telecoms operators' shareholder reports, FTTH Council data and the European Commission's study on broadband coverage by Point Topic.

The most important challenges for our digital future are the coverage of rural areas and getting consumers to take up high speeds. Rural fibre is most likely to be developed by local and regional players, therefore **regulation and public funding mechanisms should focus on enabling the deployment of local, open access fibre networks by local players** complemented by high speed mobile networks, jointly forming the optimal infrastructure.

The actual take-up of high and very high speed Internet should be a key policy target of the Digital Single Market and a metric of its success. There should be no disconnected households in Europe on account of unaffordability or lack of choice. Competition – injected by access regulation to a naturally monopolistic/duopolistic market – is the key driver of end-user take-up. Access regulation will be key also in the future not only to enable challenger investments but also to drive a genuinely connected society and economy.

European digital policy should be big on the fundamentals and focus on what matters to citizens and businesses in all sectors. The mantra should be zero tolerance for monopolies and duopolies in the digital economy and competition, competition, competition.

Signed by

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and ECTA Members:

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