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Objet: **47^{ème} réunion de la COSAC, Copenhague – 23 et 24 avril 2012**

1. Ouverture et questions de procédure

Après l'allocution de bienvenue prononcée par M. Lykketoft, Président du parlement danois, Mme Hansen, Présidente de la commission des affaires européennes du parlement danois, a ouvert la 47^{ème} réunion de la COSAC.

Mme Hansen a ensuite procédé à la présentation du 17^{ème} rapport semestriel portant sur l'évolution des procédures et pratiques de l'UE relatives au contrôle parlementaire. Mme Hansen a indiqué que le rapport traitait du rôle des parlements nationaux dans la relance du marché unique et que l'un des principaux messages était la nécessité de réduire les déficiences en matière de transposition des directives. Mme Hansen a par ailleurs présenté les conclusions du rapport s'agissant des flux d'information vers et depuis les parlements nationaux, faisant notamment le point sur l'accès des parlements nationaux aux documents du Conseil classifiés et marqués LIMITE. Intervenant sur ce dernier point, Lord Roper (*UK House of Lords*) a plaidé pour un accès plus large des parlements nationaux aux documents LIMITE, en particulier dans le cadre des trilogues.

M. Friedrich (DE *Bundesrat*), soutenu par M. Pirkhuber (AT *Nationalrat*) et M. Neofytou (CY *Vouli ton Antiprosopon*), a proposé que soit organisée une réunion des parlements nationaux afin de discuter de la mise en œuvre du mécanisme européen de stabilité. Mme Hansen a suggéré de discuter de cette proposition avec la future présidence chypriote.

M. Cash (UK *House of Commons*) a indiqué que, dans un rapport adopté récemment, le European Scrutiny Committee qu'il préside était arrivé à la conclusion que le pacte budgétaire violait le droit de l'UE.

M. Gałażewski (PL *Sejm*) a présenté les résultats des travaux de la Conférence des présidents des parlements nationaux, tenue à Varsovie les 20 et 21 avril 2012. Il a mis l'accent sur l'accord obtenu pour la création d'une conférence interparlementaire pour la PESC et la PESD, remplaçant la COFACC et la CODACC, et composée de six représentants par parlements nationaux de l'UE et 16 représentants du Parlement européen. M. Gałażewski a précisé que la présidence chypriote organiserait vraisemblablement la première réunion de cette nouvelle conférence. M. Boden (LU *Chambre des députés*), soutenu par M. Syllouris (CY *Vouli ton Antiprosopon*), s'est déclaré déçu de l'accord intervenu à Varsovie, pointant le risque de remettre en cause le rôle de la COSAC en multipliant les conférences spécialisées. M. de Croo (BE *Chambre des représentants*) a affirmé que la COSAC devait préserver sa pertinence et que son secrétariat devait jouer un rôle de coordination avec la conférence pour la PESC et la PESD.

2. Vingt ans de libre circulation des marchandises, des personnes, des services et des capitaux

M. Barroso, Président de la Commission européenne, a reconnu la nécessité de réaliser des efforts en matière de consolidation budgétaire mais a souligné que la croissance devait être encouragée dans le cadre de la stratégie Europe 2020, relevant à cet égard le rôle central du marché unique¹.

¹ Voir discours (Annexe I).

M. Krichbaum (DE *Bundestag*) a appelé à ouvrir le marché européen à l'Afrique du Nord et à stabiliser les frontières extérieures de l'UE, en recourant par exemple à des garde frontières européens. M. de Croo (BE *Chambre des représentants*) a appelé à la vigilance face aux distorsions existant sur le marché numérique et a considéré que le marché unique était handicapé par la division entre États membres et non-membres de la zone euro. M. Hannigan (IE *Dáil Eireann*) a fait part des inquiétudes suscitées en Irlande par le pacte budgétaire et a appelé à y faire référence à la croissance et à l'emploi. M. Fantetti (IT *Senato della Repubblica*) a jugé nécessaire de protéger les PME européennes de la concurrence des pays tiers alors que M. Sefzig (CS *Senat*) a appelé à lutter contre le protectionnisme. M. Hamilton (SE *Riksdagen*) a interrogé M. Barroso sur la possibilité pour les parlements nationaux d'adresser des questions écrites à la Commission. M. Rangel (PPE, PT) a déploré que le potentiel du marché unique n'aie pas entièrement été réalisé et considéré que des progrès devaient être réalisés sur l'imposition des sociétés, le statut des sociétés et le brevet européen.

M. Barroso a indiqué que la Commission avait reçu six avis motivés relatifs à sa proposition de réformer l'espace Schengen et qu'elle considérait que celle-ci respectait pleinement les prérogatives des États membres. Il a en outre jugé que l'intérêt de l'UE n'était pas de restreindre le commerce, mais plutôt de convaincre ses partenaires d'ouvrir leurs marchés. M. Barroso a fait part de son espoir que la présidence danoise progresse sur le dossier du brevet européen et considéré que, si une harmonisation fiscale complète n'était pas nécessaire, des progrès pouvaient toutefois être réalisés, en particulier sur l'imposition des sociétés. S'agissant de la possibilité pour les parlements nationaux d'adresser des questions écrites à la Commission, M. Barroso a appelé à se concentrer sur le dialogue politique existant et a indiqué qu'il n'était pas possible, à ce stade, de mettre en place le même système que celui existant pour le Parlement européen.

3. Croissance intelligente, durable et inclusive en Europe

Mme Thorning-Schmidt, Premier Ministre du Danemark, a souligné le rôle indispensable des parlements nationaux s'agissant en particulier du contrôle de la subsidiarité, et a souligné que la présidence danoise comptait sur le soutien des parlements nationaux pour agir en faveur de la croissance. Elle a estimé que, si des réformes difficiles restaient à réaliser, les premiers pas avaient déjà été faits, démontrant la capacité d'action de l'UE.

Mme Thorning-Schmidt a apporté son soutien aux initiatives en faveur de la croissance développées dans le cadre de la stratégie Europe 2020, mettant dans ce cadre l'accent sur la croissance intelligente, la promotion de l'éducation et la recherche, ainsi que la suppression des barrières existant dans le marché intérieur².

M. Dimic (SI *Državni zbor*) a fait part de son espoir que l'UE s'inspire de l'action du Danemark en matière d'énergies vertes. Mme Muttonen (AT *Nationalrat*) apporté son soutien à la taxation des transactions financières. M. Canas (PT *Assembleia da República*) a jugé important de se mettre d'accord sur un instrument relatif à la croissance et à l'emploi afin de rééquilibrer le pacte budgétaire, alors que M. Camps (ES *Congreso de los Diputados*) a appelé à combiner la croissance à la consolidation budgétaire.

Mme Thorning-Schmidt a jugé que la consolidation budgétaire ne devait pas être opposée à la création d'emplois et que le budget européen devrait être mis au service de la croissance. Elle s'est déclarée en faveur de la régulation du secteur financier.

4. Un marché unique des services – mise en œuvre intégrale de la directive Services

M. Barnier, commissaire chargé du marché intérieur et des services, a affirmé que la Commission entendait démontrer que le marché unique était le premier outil pour retrouver le chemin de la croissance. Il a souligné que la directive services devait être pleinement appliquée, a fait le point sur l'état d'avancement de la mise en œuvre de l'Acte pour le marché unique et a appelé à améliorer la gouvernance du marché unique³.

M. Harbour, président de la Commission du marché intérieur et protection des consommateurs du Parlement européen (ECR, UK), a souligné que, si la directive services était ambitieuse, elle n'avait toutefois pas réalisé tout son potentiel, et a rappelé que le Parlement européen avait appelé à améliorer l'information des PME quant aux opportunités créées par cette directive. M. Harbour a considéré que l'Acte pour le marché unique était la plus importante initiative pour revitaliser le marché unique depuis 1992, et a mis dans ce contexte l'accent sur la réforme des marchés publics.

² Voir discours (Annexe II).

³ Voir discours (Annexe III).

Mme Olechowska (PL *Sejm*), ainsi que MM. Vestlund (SE *Riksdagen*) et Mayer (AT *Bundesrat*), ont appelé à améliorer la situation des PME, alors que M. Lejiņš (LV *Saeima*) a indiqué espérer qu'un accord serait obtenu sur le brevet européen. M. Caresche (FR *Assemblée nationale*) a souligné qu'il convenait d'avancer en matière d'harmonisation fiscale et de préserver les droits sociaux et professionnels. M. Auštrevičius (LT *Seimas*) a interrogé la Commission sur l'accès aux marchés des pays tiers, en particulier s'agissant des marchés publics.

M. Barnier a souligné le caractère prioritaire du brevet européen et espéré qu'un accord intervienne en juin. Il a précisé que la Commission œuvrait en faveur des PME, notamment s'agissant des marchés publics et des règles en matière de capitalisation boursière, et s'est déclaré attentif à ce que les droits sociaux ne soient pas remis en cause. S'agissant de l'accès aux marchés publics dans les pays tiers, M. Barnier a relevé l'absence d'ouverture réciproque au Japon, en Chine et aux USA et souligné que la Commission souhaitait y remédier. Il a par ailleurs relevé que la Commission proposait de simplifier significativement les procédures applicables aux marchés publics.

5. Croissance durable – promouvoir la transition vers une économie efficace dans l'utilisation des ressources en Europe

M. Potočnik, commissaire européen à l'environnement, a mis l'accent sur l'importance de l'efficacité dans l'utilisation des ressources et appelé à découpler l'utilisation des ressources de la croissance économique⁴.

Le commissaire a été interrogé par M. Pirkhuber (AT *Nationalrat*) sur la prise en compte, dans le cadre de l'évaluation de l'empreinte écologique, des coûts externes tels que celui du stockage des déchets nucléaires. M. Frangež (SI *Državni zbor*) a souligné que les objectifs de la stratégie Europe 2020 en matière environnementale devaient être respectés. M. Fyttis (CY *Vouli ton Antiprosopon*) a jugé que les technologies et les modes de production innovants devaient être promus au niveau de l'UE et que les changements climatiques, en particulier ceux frappant les pays méditerranéens, devaient être pris en compte. M. Cash (UK *House of Commons*) a demandé si la Commission avait étudié les arguments de ceux qui nient le changement climatique ainsi que les coûts des énergies renouvelables.

⁴ Voir discours (Annexe IV).

M. Watson (ALDE, UK) a déploré que des milliards d'euros soient perdus dans des politiques qui nuisent à l'environnement. Mme Plugtschieva (BG *Narodno Sabranie*) a déploré que la protection des forêts soit négligée et a demandé si la mise en place d'une politique commune des forêts était envisageable.

M. Potočnik a relevé que l'évaluation des coûts externes était problématique, dans la mesure où ils n'étaient pas pris en compte par les marchés. Il a considéré que la croissance ne devait pas seulement être découplée de l'utilisation du CO₂, mais également de celle de ressources telles que l'eau. M. Potočnik a souligné que la politique de la forêt relevait du niveau national, mais a indiqué que la Commission travaillait sur l'échange d'informations et que M. Ciolos présenterait une stratégie renouvelée pour les forêts. S'agissant du changement climatique, M. Potočnik s'est référé aux travaux du panel international sur le changement climatique et considéré qu'il traduisait un large consensus sur la réalité de ce phénomène.

6. Le marché unique numérique

Mme Kroes, Vice-présidente de la Commission européenne et commissaire européenne à la stratégie numérique, a mis l'accent dans son intervention sur la rentabilité des investissements dans les technologies d'information et de communication, en particulier s'agissant du broadband. Elle a également souligné le rôle crucial des parlements nationaux afin de s'assurer que les États membres soutiennent le développement de l'économie numérique⁵.

M. Jakič (SI *Državni zbor*) et M. Paus (DE *Bundestag*) ont interrogé la commissaire sur l'impact d'ACTA sur le marché unique numérique, alors que M. Anasagasti (ES *Senado*) et M. Viskupič (SK *Národná rada*) ont déploré la fragmentation de celui-ci. M. Harrison (UK *House of Lords*) a interrogé la commissaire sur son action en matière de marchés publics électroniques. Mme Morin-Desailly (FR *Sénat*) a considéré qu'il fallait progresser sur l'harmonisation en matière de TVA et de droit des sociétés. Mme Gebhardt (S&D, DE) a souligné que, s'agissant des droits d'auteur, il convenait de respecter la spécificité d'internet, en particulier, son ouverture.

⁵ Voir discours (Annexe V).

Mme Kroes a indiqué s'être employée à ce qu'ACTA ne remette pas en cause l'ouverture d'internet et rappelé que la Cour de justice de l'UE était désormais saisie de l'accord. Elle a considéré que la généralisation des marchés publics électroniques permettrait un gain de temps et d'argent. Mme Kroes a affirmé que des solutions devaient être trouvées, en ce qui concerne les droits d'auteur, afin d'éviter une fragmentation du marché unique et s'est déclarée en faveur de licences pan-européennes.

7. Adoption de la contribution à l'attention des institutions de l'Union européenne et des conclusions de la XLVII^{ème} COSAC

La COSAC a procédé à l'adoption de sa contribution et de ses conclusions. M. Martínez Martínez (S&D, ES) a annoncé que le Parlement européen produirait une déclaration concernant la contribution de la COSAC afin de souligner qu'elle n'affectait pas l'article 230 TFUE.

M. Neofytou (CY *Vouli ton Antiprosopon*) a annoncé que la première conférence interparlementaire pour la PESC et la PESD serait organisée à Paros du 9 au 11 septembre, la réunion des présidents de la COSAC à Limassol les 8 et 9 juillet, et la COSAC à Nicosie du 14 au 16 octobre.

President Barroso***Releasing the full potential of the Single Market to deliver smart, sustainable and inclusive growth¹***

Dear Chair of EU Affairs Committee Ms Kjer Hansen,
Distinguished Members of the European Parliament and national parliaments,
Dear guests,

It is a great pleasure to join you for this COSAC meeting here in Copenhagen. Copenhagen is appropriate for this meeting because the Danish Folketing is one of the most supported national parliaments of the EU.

COSAC has chosen to focus your discussions at this plenary on the future of the Single Market. The Single Market is the crown jewel of the EU.

Over the past two decades, the Single Market has transformed the way Europeans live, work, travel, do business and study. It has opened up opportunities for businesses to expand and learn how to become successful globally.

And more importantly, it has allowed for human, cultural and social contacts across borders in a way I could not have imagined as a young man.

Today we take the Single Market freedoms for granted because they are such an integral part of the daily lives of 500 million European citizens and 23 million European businesses.

But twenty years after 1992, it is important that we take a moment to pause and reflect. Reflect not only on what a tremendous achievement the Single Market is. But also on how we can best put this unique tool to Europe's best advantage as an engine driving forward sustainable growth and jobs.

The greatest economic, financial and social crisis the European Union has faced since its inception is still far from over.

Promoting a return to growth and competitiveness has been the central focus of the European Commission's work since the onset of the crisis. Yes, public finances must be put on a surer footing; yes, we need a more stable and responsible financial sector at the service of the real economy; yes, we need stronger economic governance and discipline; yes, European Member States must continue their efforts to deliver fundamental structural reforms for competitiveness; and yes, we must continue to support Member States, namely Greece in resolving its problems and delivering solutions for its people.

That is why the Commission last week adopted a Communication entitled "Growth for Greece" that aims to unblock growth, create jobs and mitigate some of the social impacts of the crisis. These actions complement the great efforts made by Greece in the last months to undertake the necessary measures to secure the second financial assistance programme it is now under.

But at the same time, these efforts must be accompanied by a comprehensive and ambitious strategy to unleash smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. We need fiscal consolidation, structural reforms and the difficult measures governments are now taking, but we also need hope and we need a strategy for growth.

Europe has such a strategy – the Europe 2020 strategy which was endorsed by the European Council and the European Parliament two years ago and which we have been working to implement since then.

The Europe 2020 strategy's ambitious objectives are being addressed through seven flagship initiatives. These include initiatives on a digital agenda for Europe, on innovation, on resource efficiency and mobility for young people. Crucially, these initiatives also include an agenda for new skills and jobs.

¹ Check against delivery.

As part of this, the Commission last week adopted a set of concrete proposals to boost job-creation, focusing on sectors with great potential, and lifting barriers towards a genuine European labour market.

All these initiatives are underpinned by targets at national level that are reflected in our Country-Specific Recommendations as part of the European Semester.

And our proposals for Europe's future investment budget, the Multi-annual Financial Framework, are also tied to these objectives, demonstrating the Commission's determination to use all tools available to us to drive this agenda – the agenda for growth and jobs. That is how this budget should be understood, as a tool for growth.

Getting the very most out of the Single Market is absolutely crucial to the success of this comprehensive growth strategy.

Ladies and gentlemen,

To release the full potential of the Single Market as an engine for growth and the Europe 2020 objectives, we need to further enhance it.

To build on its strengths, to adapt it to the digital era, to improve its infrastructure and ensure interconnectivity, to address residual legal and technical bottlenecks wherever they are holding back growth.

To take a concrete example: the digital Single Market could be a major driver for growth across Europe. Yet because of legal and practical barriers which undermine confidence, only 7% of e-commerce takes place across borders. This is extraordinary when we think that in the future most of the markets will be digital and not physical.

That means less choice for consumers and missed opportunities for creators and businesses. We have failed to deliver a single European online market for films or music for example.

For e-commerce to thrive, we need to strengthen consumer and business confidence in the rules and tools, from parcel delivery to returns policies and payments safety.

One year ago, the Commission proposed a Single Market Act with twelve key actions to unlock growth. The priorities include proposals to help workers get their qualifications recognised in other countries, financing for SMEs, cheaper access to patent protection, simpler accounting requirements and developing the Digital Single Market.

Eleven of these proposals are now with the Council and the European Parliament, and the Commission will deliver the last proposal (on e-signatures) in the coming weeks.

Thanks to the active support of the Danish Presidency and the European Parliament, these proposals are being fast-tracked, and I hope that by the end of the year we will see them adopted and ready to release their growth-boosting potential.

And later this year, the Commission will come with a further set of measures to continue this on-going process of enhancing the Single Market. Our focus will be on measures which have the greatest economic potential to deliver growth, employment, and boost competitiveness.

However important these efforts to further develop the Single Market, it is also absolutely crucial that we make the most of what is already in place by implementing Single Market rules effectively on the ground.

For no matter how ambitious and smart the rules, without a strong commitment to implementation and ownership on the ground, the Single Market will never deliver all it should do in the interests of European citizens.

A well functioning Single Market will only drive growth if there is a shared commitment to its governance by all stakeholders including the national parliaments, regional and local authorities, social partners, enforcement authorities, networks and business associations.

Member States' governments and national parliaments too need to play their part. The number of infringements of Single Market legislation is still far too high. In some cases, growth-boosting European rules are left waiting for several years before finally being transposed into national law.

So we take decisions on basis of long consultations but then often it takes many years to get the decisions implemented on the ground.

When it comes to putting the rules into practice on the ground, experience shows that we need a more sustained approach to help Member States through the process. The experience of the mutual evaluation system under the Services Directive was positive in this respect.

But as the on-going performance checks are showing, we still have a long way to go to ensure full application of the Directive. This work has to be undertaken in partnership and it takes time.

But the results are clear: if the Services Directive was fully implemented, it would produce immediate results by facilitating cross-border provision of services, and could boost the European economy by 1.5% of its GDP. I could make other cases, for instance the European patent that we have been discussing for 30 years. I hope now under the Danish Presidency we will reach an agreement on the patent that is so essential for our Single Market.

Following the Spring European Council, there is a new sense of engagement on these issues from European leaders. Heads of State and Governments have now understood how important it is to complete the Single Market in order to boost growth. The Commission intends to build on this momentum and will present a range of ideas for improving Single Market governance and filling the implementation gap ahead of the June European Council.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The path back to stability and growth is long and requires hard work and determination by us all. COSAC is a crucial forum for partnership in the effort to get us out of the crisis.

Building partnership and ownership with national parliaments is essential not only to drive forward the Single Market and make sure its benefits are actually delivered on the ground, but also to promote Europe's future growth and prosperity across the board.

The scale of the economic crisis is ample proof of how interlinked and interdependent our economies have become, and I believe it is proof of how closely we need to work together to overcome it.

We must use these links to our advantage and use them to build a strong and united European economy.

That is why I launched the political dialogue with individual national parliaments almost exactly six years ago, even before the Lisbon Treaty was adopted, and why I very much welcome opportunities such as this to speak with representatives of the national parliaments and of course the European Parliament. And I am happy to see that with myself four European Commissioners will participate in this debate.

The Commission remains convinced that building constructive relations with you based on transparency, mutual trust and respect can contribute significantly to bringing about a qualitative change in the public debate on European issues.

The involvement of national parliaments in European policy making is essential, and it is precisely this approach that is enshrined in the European Semester – a process of economic policy coordination between Member States and the European Institutions that is currently in its second year.

The European Semester is a process of mutual discipline, support, practical guidance and workable solutions to the problems we face today.

Through the new economic governance framework we now have, the European Union is tackling its economic problems and taking its economic decisions in a more integrated and coordinated way than ever before.

We must also use this approach in implementing the Europe 2020 Strategy in a coherent and committed manner, with buy-in from all levels of society. One of the main tools for delivering the Europe 2020 growth strategy will be the European Union's future budget, the Multi-annual Financial Framework.

By investing in networks, in infrastructure and in research on a European scale, it will channel resources that can help to complete the internal market by filling the gaps that Member States alone would not.

That is why some investments must be front-loaded and that is why the Commission proposed launching pilot project bonds, even before the next MFF. The European Council agreed to this proposal in March, and I hope to see these large-scale projects getting off the ground very soon. Once again we need targeted public investments at the European level.

The European budget can play a vital role in shaping our capacity to meet our common goal of creating a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy, and I look for your support in maintaining this level of ambition throughout the negotiations.

On this note, I would like sincerely to thank the Danish Presidency, and in particular Eva Kjaer Hansen, Chairwoman of the EU Affairs Committee of the Danish parliament, for their commitment to intensifying political dialogue between the Commission and the national parliaments.

The Commission is equally determined to intensify contacts with national parliaments on Commission proposals and initiatives, in particular in the framework of economic governance. As I have said before, we need two levels of democracy. The European Parliament is critically important, we also need national parliaments. Only through cooperation can we achieve legitimacy and democracy for the European project. We need ownership of projects such as Europe 2020 and the Single Market at all levels. It cannot be lead only from Brussels.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me conclude, we have a common goal - to get Europe's businesses growing again and to ensure our citizens have quality and sustainable jobs. We have a strategy to achieve this goal – the Europe 2020 strategy. It is comprehensive and flexible enough to support any kind of new initiatives at European level.

And we have a number of tools at our disposal to implement it. The Single Market is a central component of this growth strategy.

Lifting barriers requires little in the way of investment but can bring huge returns and deliver the economic benefit that our businesses and citizens need. Achieving it requires coherence, determination, but also partnership. I know this sense of partnership is already well established between us and I have every confidence that we can enhance it in the months and years ahead in the pursuit of our common goal.

Thank you for your attention.

Prime Minister Thorning-Schmidt
*Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth in Europe*¹

Distinguished representatives of national parliaments and the European Parliament, ladies and gentlemen.

I am very pleased to speak today at the 47th bi-annual COSAC meeting and to have the opportunity to meet with representatives of the national parliaments from the different Member States and the European Parliament.

National parliaments play an indispensable role in EU politics – both when it comes to scrutiny and subsidiarity. You are close to the citizens. You are involved in all phases of the EU decision-making process – from preparation over adoption to the crucial implementation of EU law. Furthermore, you have a vital role in communicating European politics.

If Europe is to succeed with its most paramount task today – to get Europe back on a track for growth and jobs – the efforts that you do are imperative.

Both when it comes to the tasks which are first and foremost the responsibility of each Member State: Adopting sound budgets. And implementing reforms that enhance competitiveness. But also when it comes to deciding and implementing new EU initiatives to stimulate growth. Growth and new jobs is a top priority for the Danish Presidency and we count on your support.

When we took over the Presidency a few months ago, many were asking the same question: Is the EU doing enough to stem the debt crisis and restore growth? Well, tough decisions have been taken in Europe since then and more will follow.

Does this mean that we are on the right road to recovery in Europe? Responding to this, which is the big question for our debate today, I will quote Sir Winston Churchill who once said: “A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty”.

We are indeed still faced with difficulties in Europe. The latest forecast from the European Commission shows that the EU is set to experience stagnating GDP this year. And according to recent Eurostat figures, we are looking at the highest unemployment rates in the euro zone since 1999.

Millions of Europeans are finding themselves at the receiving end of cut-backs, lay-offs, bankruptcies, rising debt and a frozen housing market.

So to call off the crisis would be unjustified and naïve. However, the answer to the crisis lies not merely in focusing on the difficulties but also focusing on the opportunities.

I have always been a strong believer in the European project and the use of finding common solutions. To handle this crisis, Member States must co-operate, make compromises and align their different capabilities in order to achieve maximum firepower. I am an optimist regarding the future of Europe.

I find several grounds for optimism:

Firstly, European leaders have shown the will to confront the challenges. Over the past months, we have taken a number of steps that redefine the economic governance of the European Union. The Fiscal Compact, the second loan agreement for Greece and the bolstering of the fire-wall are all important steps towards re-establishing confidence in the European economy and stabilising financial markets.

¹ Check against delivery.

Furthermore, while the targeted effort from the European Central Bank cannot and should not replace reforms in the Member States, it has contributed significantly to calming the markets. These actions have marked a turning point that enables us to look beyond urgent crisis management and put growth and jobs at the top of the European agenda.

Just this fact that we are now talking about growth and jobs and not only crisis management, this is a remarkable game changer. At the EU summits in January and March this allowed us to agree on a number of initiatives to spur growth and address youth unemployment. Youth unemployment is one a major problem facing Europe as we work to get back on track towards long term growth.

Although growth prospects are still dim and unemployment rates are still troubling, the apocalyptic scenarios are off the table. Confidence of households, companies and financial markets is returning after a deep crisis of confidence. Positive growth is expected to return to the euro area in the second half of 2012, although with significant variation among countries.

Secondly, Member States all over Europe have carried out, or are planning to carry out tough reforms.

Some have blamed Europe for inaction and for not taking the need to reform seriously. I strongly oppose this view. The current crisis has in fact created a general understanding that structural reforms are necessary and that difficult decisions are inevitable.

A number of Member States, including my own, have already implemented or are implementing budget rules, which ensure strict budgetary discipline and swift action if public deficits rise above the agreed limit in the Fiscal Compact. This is to ensure balanced and healthy budgets in Europe now and in the future.

We still have hard decisions and more reforms in front of us. But the first steps have already been taken to restore confidence and ensure the long-term viability of the European model. This goes to prove that Europe is capable of taking action, when action is needed.

This is not a juncture for complacency. We have mapped a path out of the crisis. But it is far too early to call off the crisis. Economic uncertainty is still significant. It will take a long haul and a lot of political craftsmanship, in individual countries as well as at the EU level.

Getting out of the crisis will require much more than a stable economic foundation. To make progress and regain our global competitiveness, we must combine our efforts to stabilise the economy with ambitious growth initiatives that are smart, sustainable and inclusive.

This was the message of the EU2020 strategy – a message which has no less importance today than when it came out. Allow me to move beyond the headlines and point to some of the elements that I find crucial in building a competitive and prosperous Europe for the future.

Firstly, we must ensure smart growth for Europe. There is no denying that globalisation has sharpened the global competition. We all feel that in our individual member states. Therefore, Europe needs to sharpen its competitive edge. In order to do so, Europe needs to compete globally on skills. We should do so by promoting education, research and innovation and by removing barriers for growth in the Single Market, including the digital Single Market.

Maintaining and expanding excellent research environments in Europe is an important element in the efforts to ensure long-term economic growth and job creation. In this regard, research and innovation should be closer linked in the new framework programme for research.

Innovation should also be stimulated by easier access to finance for small and medium sized enterprises as recognised by the European Council. We now that SME's provide some 67 percent of all jobs in the EU. Providing them with access to capital to be invested in innovative start ups is doable and holds real potential for growth and jobs in Europe.

We also know that a stronger and modernised Single Market is vital for smart growth and job creation in the EU. Recently, the OECD recommended that we look to the Single Market for growth. This is no coincidence.

Since its launch, the Single Market is estimated to have created growth worth 800 billion Euros. Barriers to free movement have been broken down, prices have been lowered and the supply of goods expanded. The Single Market is the main engine for European growth. But the engine needs tuning up.

Every day, European businesses and consumers still face obstacles in the Single Market – be it a consumer who cannot buy goods off a foreign website or a business who is kept from entering the market of another EU Member State.

We always talk about this in a general way. But let me give you an example: a smaller, Danish consultancy firm was booked to do a job in another Member State. To do this job, it needed data from the national statistics office. Upon its request, the firm was met with the answer that only national businesses could be granted access to the data, making it impossible for the firm to do the job they were hired to do.

This is just one example of a technical barrier to trade in the Single Market. The good news is that this barrier was removed, although it took some time. The bad news is that plenty of other examples still exist.

That is why the Danish Presidency has made the relaunch of the Single Market and the 12 growth levers in the Commission's Single Market Act a top priority. We are very pleased with the momentum given to this agenda by the recent European Council meetings. But now it is time to put words into action.

We will do the utmost to attain results on as many proposals as possible in the Single Market Act. But we cannot achieve this without the strong support from you and all actors involved.

We have another important source of smart growth. That is the Digital Single Market.

It is estimated that the EU could achieve an overall increase in GDP by 4 percent by creating a well functioning digital single market. 4 percent we could need right now.

Take as an example the roaming package, which the Danish Presidency on behalf of the Council and the European Parliament reached agreement on last month. It reduces the price of mobile data by up to 90 per cent by 2014, thus making it cheaper and easier for European businesses and consumers to buy and sell services and goods via their mobile phones.

This is a good example of a smart growth initiative with real impact on the everyday lives of European companies and consumers. This is the Single Market at its very best.

Secondly, we must ensure sustainable growth in Europe.

We need growth, which is long-lasting; growth which does not compromise our future.

The transition to a green economy should not be perceived as a choice between growth on the one hand and addressing climate challenge and resource scarcity on the other.

There is not necessarily a conflict between these two objectives. If we make the right policy choices we can lay the foundation for resource efficient growth that will ensure a more competitive and a greener Europe.

We also have a first mover advantage in the EU. We should use that advantage.

We have already taken a lead on the global stage with an ambitious energy and climate policy. We are in a strong position to take advantage of the opportunities of sustainable production and consumption.

But we must also continue our effort to stay ahead of our game in the global competition. If we relax our ambitions the potential of sustainable growth will be realised elsewhere.

More than 20 million European jobs are linked to the environment in one way or another. We have to ensure that these high-tech research and knowledge-intensive jobs remain in Europe and that new green jobs are created in the future.

To achieve this goal, we must take the necessary decisions that will allow us to stay in the lead.

This includes increased promotion of energy efficiency and renewable energy as well as an EU budget that underpins sustainable agriculture.

We must also work hard to bring sustainable development to the top of the agenda at the global level. Currently, the Danish Presidency is doing its best to ensure a clear and strong European voice at the Rio+20 summit in June.

If we do not create the right conditions, the green transformation will not happen. And we cannot do it without your help as national legislators in Europe.

In Denmark, we aim to do our part as well.

Last month my government secured broad political support in the Danish Parliament for a truly historic energy agreement.

The agreement provides for the construction of new major wind farms.

The goal is that half of all Danish electricity consumption will be provided by wind energy by 2020. And we have charted the course to our next, even more ambitious goal: One hundred percent renewable energy in Denmark by 2050.

This agreement does not only bring Denmark in the lead when it comes to the green economy transition. It is also estimated to create up to 8.000 new jobs in the Danish energy sector.

There is no reason why similar ambitions at the EU level cannot deliver the same results.

And this is exactly what green growth is all about.

Thirdly – and finally – it is important that we ensure inclusive growth in Europe.

More than 24 million Europeans are currently without a job. The youth unemployment rate is now at a staggering 22,4 percent leaving many young people without hope.

What our youth demand of us is only fair: access to the same education and job opportunities that previous generations have enjoyed. A chance to contribute to their societies and to build a secure future for themselves.

We owe it to these people and to society as a whole to aim not only for prosperity, but also for solidarity. We must ensure growth, which does not leave anyone to fend for themselves.

We must protect the core values of solidarity, safety nets and equal opportunity in our European social model. The best way to protect the heart of our European social model is to ensure that it is constantly up to speed.

Those of us who are the strongest proponents of our welfare state must also take on the responsibility and take the lead when it comes to reforming it to make sure that the European model stays viable and competitive. This cannot be done without tough choices.

It requires structural reforms in every Member State; some of which have already been launched; some of which are still in the making. The European Semester is a key instrument in this endeavour because it will help ensure that Member States implement these reforms in a coordinated manner.

As Presidency of the Council, we encourage Member States to accelerate structural reforms in line with the recommendations in the national reform programmes and the stability and convergence programmes.

However, the main responsibility remains with national governments and Parliaments. With you and myself – with us.

In the end, it is us, who must ensure that our youth has access to the same opportunities as we did. It is us who must ensure inclusive growth in Europe.

Ladies and gentlemen, circumstances are difficult today, as they were yesterday and as they will be tomorrow. Despite the best of our efforts, the crisis is not over yet.

However, as I have laid out here today, I do find reason to choose optimism over pessimism. I do see opportunity ahead.

With the Fiscal Compact, we have created a stable foundation on which to move forward. And the reform agenda has been initiated.

What we must do now is use the instruments at our disposal to build on that foundation, and ensure smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in Europe. The Danish Presidency is dedicated to this task. But we cannot do it without you.

When it comes to getting Europe out of the current crisis, you are key. Because of your role in formulating, deciding and implementing the necessary common European policies. And no less important, because many of the necessary steps must be taken at the Member State level by each national parliament.

All too often, the crisis is portrayed as a misdoing of wrongful or inadequate EU policies.

However, a sound budget is first and foremost the responsibility of each Member State.

Competitive, but socially balanced, labour market policies are first and foremost the responsibility of each Member State. And education policy and investments in research and innovation are first and foremost the responsibility of each Member State.

We have important tools at the European level, such as the European Semester to set common guidelines, evaluate progress and learn from best practices.

But in these areas where the competencies and the responsibility ultimately lie with the Member States, we depend on each Member State to keep their own house in order and to invest in the future. Not *only* for themselves, but also for the sake of the *whole*.

And so let us embark on this task together – parliaments and governments alike. I hope you share my optimism – and even more importantly – I hope you agree when I say: Optimism is good, but action is better.

Thank you for your attention.

M. Barnier, Membre de la Commission européenne, chargé du Marché intérieur et des Services

Marché unique : les défis 20 ans après¹

Mesdames et Messieurs,

Permettez-moi tout d'abord de remercier le Parlement danois, son Président, M. Mogens LYKKETOFT, et la Présidente de la commission des affaires européennes, Mme Eva Kjer HANSEN, pour l'organisation de cette réunion de la COSAC, en grande partie dédiée au marché unique.

Notre marché unique aura 20 ans à la fin de cette année. Cet anniversaire ne doit être ni un moment de nostalgie, ni une manifestation d'autosatisfaction.

Comme l'a dit le Président Barroso ce matin, cet anniversaire doit nous conduire à mesurer le chemin parcouru, mais surtout à prendre la mesure de qu'il reste à accomplir, des obstacles qu'il nous faut encore écarter pour adapter le marché unique aux réalités du 21^{ème} siècle.

Je ne vais pas revenir sur les réalisations de ces 20 dernières années, qui sont nombreuses. Je ne vais pas non plus détailler les grands axes de la relance du marché unique, comme le marché unique numérique ou la mobilité des professionnels, qui ont été évoqués par le Président Barroso ce matin. Je voudrais me concentrer cet après-midi sur la feuille de route et sur la méthode. Et répondre à une question : comment, très concrètement, allons-nous franchir ces barrières qui limitent encore le potentiel du marché unique ?

Ma réponse à cette question tient en trois points.

I – Premier point : il nous faut appliquer pleinement la directive Services.

Des quatre grandes libertés qui fondent le marché unique, la libre circulation des services est sans aucun doute la moins aboutie.

Trop d'entreprises, notamment des PME, qui veulent ouvrir une succursale dans un autre Etat membre se heurtent à des formalités lourdes et à des procédures longues, ou pas assez transparentes. Trop d'entrepreneurs qui veulent proposer leurs services à l'étranger rencontrent des difficultés pratiques.

Et pourtant, les services représentent 70 % du PIB et des emplois dans la plupart des Etats membres.

On mesure bien la nécessité d'avoir un secteur des services fort et compétitif, qui va d'ailleurs de pair avec le besoin de maintenir, ou de faire revenir en Europe, une industrie manufacturière, elle-même consommatrice de services.

La directive Services de 2006, qui couvre 65% des services, impose des mesures ambitieuses pour encourager les nouveaux investissements et stimuler l'activité. Je pense en particulier à trois points :

- - la simplification des formalités administratives pour créer une entreprise de services ;
- la modernisation, l'allègement, voire la suppression des régimes d'autorisation ;
- et la mise en place des guichets uniques, qui sont des points de contact en ligne pour toutes les entreprises qui veulent mener des activités dans un autre Etat membre.

Ces obligations de la directive Services ont eu un impact important sur la compétitivité de nos économies nationales.

Mais il est clair que nous pourrions aller plus loin dans le décloisonnement des marchés nationaux. Quelles sont les options sur la table ?

¹ Seul le discours prononcé fait foi.

1. Tout d'abord, faut-il élargir le champ de la directive Services ?

Je ne le crois pas.

Aujourd'hui, 90% des activités de services sont couvertes par des règles européennes.

Le commerce de détail, la construction ou les services aux entreprises sont couverts par la directive Services. D'autres directives traitent des services financiers, des services de transport ou de fourniture d'énergie.

Seuls quelques secteurs ne sont pas couverts, comme par exemple les jeux de hasard ou la sécurité privée.

A mon sens, investir nos énergies dans ces secteurs serait disproportionné au regard de l'impact possible sur la croissance.

La priorité n'est donc pas d'étendre la directive Services, mais de s'assurer qu'elle s'applique intégralement aux secteurs couverts.

Selon les études dont nous disposons, cette pleine application de la directive Services pourrait ajouter 1,5 point au PIB européen à l'horizon 2020.

2. Reste une question cruciale : comment assurer la pleine application de la directive Services?

La première réponse est celle de la transposition complète de la directive. A ce jour, seul un Etat membre n'a pas encore adopté tous les textes nécessaires. Nous avons pris la décision d'assigner ce pays retardataire devant la Cour de Justice.

Au-delà de la transposition, il faut aussi s'assurer de l'efficacité sur le terrain de la directive Services.

C'est l'objet de la Communication que nous présenterons au Conseil européen du mois de juin. Cela nous permettra de développer les trois éléments clés de notre stratégie en matière de services :

i. Tout d'abord, nous présenterons un "rapport d'application", qui analysera l'impact économique et la mise en œuvre juridique de la directive, ainsi que le fonctionnement des guichets uniques.

Concrètement, nous présenterons la situation dans chaque Etat membre pour que chacun puisse prendre ses responsabilités et savoir où concentrer ses efforts.

ii. Ensuite, nous ferons le bilan des tests de performance du marché intérieur des services que nous avons conduits au cours des derniers mois. Nous proposerons en conséquence de nouvelles actions pour mieux exploiter le plein potentiel de la directive.

iii. Enfin, nous présenterons des lignes directrices à l'attention des Etats membres pour améliorer l'accès des citoyens aux services. Il s'agit notamment de combattre les discriminations à l'encontre des consommateurs fondées sur la localisation géographique. Je pense en particulier au domaine du commerce en ligne.

Mesdames et Messieurs,

Cette question de la mise en œuvre de la directive Services est au cœur de la relance du marché unique.

Mais le marché unique ne se limite pas aux services.

II – Mon deuxième point est plus large : il concerne l'état d'avancement de l'Acte pour le marché unique.

Vous le savez, l'Acte pour le marché unique, que nous avons adopté collectivement il y a tout juste un an, contient 12 leviers et 12 actions clés pour une nouvelle croissance, plus forte, mais aussi plus verte, plus innovante, plus inclusive et plus soutenable.

Parmi ces 12 actions clés, plusieurs concernent d'ailleurs le secteur des services. Je pense à la réforme de la directive Qualifications professionnelles, à l'accélération de la normalisation des services au niveau européen et aux législations sur la reconnaissance mutuelle de l'identification en ligne et sur la signature électronique, qui ouvrent la voie à un vrai marché unique numérique.

Sur les 12 actions clés, 11 ont déjà été proposés par la Commission. La proposition sur la signature électronique suivra prochainement.

Pour toutes ces réformes, la balle est maintenant dans le camp des co-législateurs.

Et les Parlements nationaux ont un rôle important à jouer, qu'il s'agisse d'évaluer nos propositions ou de donner l'impulsion nécessaire à l'adoption de ces réformes de croissance avant la fin 2012.

Quant à nous, sans attendre l'entrée en vigueur de ces réformes, nous avons décidé de présenter au second semestre de cette année une deuxième phase de l'Acte pour le marché unique, avec 12 nouvelles actions clés.

Le choix de ces nouvelles actions sera crucial : elles doivent faire sauter les principaux verrous qui nous privent encore du potentiel du marché unique, en donnant la priorité aux mesures pouvant avoir des effets immédiats sur la croissance.

Mesdames et Messieurs,

III – Mon troisième point concerne la gouvernance du marché unique.

Les mesures de l'Acte pour le marché unique, comme le brevet unique européen, l'accès au capital-risque partout en Europe ou la réforme des marchés publics, peuvent nous apporter des points de croissance en plus.

Mais légiférer ne suffit pas. Il faut aussi se pencher sur l'usage qui est fait des nouvelles règles.

Un Commissaire ne peut se contenter de lancer de grands chantiers en se désintéressant du suivi. Je veux assurer le "service après-vente" de l'Acte pour le marché unique.

Non seulement en suivant les discussions au Parlement européen et au Conseil.

Mais aussi en m'assurant que nos propositions produisent des effets positifs et concrets sur le terrain.

Comment dès lors améliorer la gouvernance du marché unique ?

1. D'abord, il nous faut renforcer la surveillance de la transposition des règles par les Etats membres. C'est le but du tableau d'affichage du marché intérieur [scoreboard]. En 2011, 16 Etats membres n'ont pas atteint l'objectif fixé par le Conseil européen d'un déficit de transposition inférieur à 1 %. La Commission continuera d'agir de manière déterminée pour atteindre cet objectif, si nécessaire en lançant des procédures d'infractions de manière plus systématique.

2. Deuxième point : nous devons mieux soutenir les Etats membres dans leurs efforts d'application des règles, notamment en entretenant un dialogue étroit avec ceux qui sont en charge de leur application. Depuis le début de mon mandat il y a deux ans, j'ai été dans toutes les capitales de l'Union pour rencontrer les fonctionnaires en charge de l'application des règles du marché intérieur. Je m'assurerai personnellement que ce dialogue soit poursuivi et amplifié.

3. Enfin, nous devons mieux utiliser les outils existants. Le tableau d'affichage, bien sûr, mais aussi les guichets uniques, le portail "L'Europe est à vous", qui informe les citoyens sur leurs droits, SOLVIT et le système d'information du marché intérieur, IMI, qui met en relation les autorités compétentes.

Tous ces éléments seront repris chaque année dans un rapport, afin d'évaluer de manière précise et régulière la portée et l'efficacité des outils existants.

Mais nous souhaitons aussi aller plus loin, être plus ambitieux.

En réponse au Conseil européen de printemps, et comme mentionné dans la lettre du Président Barroso aux 12 chefs d'Etat et de gouvernement favorables à une initiative de croissance le 27 février dernier, la Commission présentera au mois de juin une nouvelle stratégie en matière de gouvernance.

Nous souhaitons apporter plus de cohérence dans l'ensemble de nos initiatives en matière d'évaluation des politiques publiques, telles que le Semestre européen. Nous souhaitons également définir des objectifs de transposition plus ambitieux, notamment pour les secteurs clés pour la croissance.

La réflexion est en cours, et nous devons l'alimenter ensemble au cours de ces prochains mois.

Mesdames et Messieurs,

Directive Services ; Acte pour le marché unique dont nous ouvrons une nouvelle phase ; questions de gouvernance : vous le voyez, le chemin vers l'achèvement du marché unique est encore long.

Mais la route est tracée et notre progression est rapide et déterminée.

Ce chemin, la Commission ne peut bien sûr pas le parcourir seule. Elle a besoin de l'engagement plein et entier des Etats membres. Et elle a besoin d'un dialogue politique étroit avec les Parlements nationaux.

Sur les réformes engagées dans le cadre de l'Acte pour le marché unique ; sur le choix des nouvelles mesures que nous proposerons après l'été ; sur la gouvernance de notre marché unique, j'invite chacun et chacune d'entre vous à nous faire des propositions et à encourager le débat au sein de son propre Parlement.

Je compte notamment sur l'implication des Parlements nationaux lors de la semaine du marché unique, qui se tiendra dans toute l'Europe du 15 au 19 octobre 2012.

C'est en agissant ensemble que nous ferons du marché unique une vraie source de croissance, au service des citoyens et des entreprises d'Europe.

Merci pour votre attention.

M. Potočník, European Commissioner for Environment***The economy and the environment are deeply interlinked¹*****Resource Efficiency**

As Commissioner for Environment I am very happy to be invited to speak to you about single market issues. I am not joking. You might think that it is unusual to bring environment policy into the single market debate, but the more you think about it the less unusual it seems.

From the beginning of my mandate I have tried to take the environment to the heart of the economic debate. I put our resource efficiency flagship at the centre of the Europe 2020 Strategy, and I believe it is the most significant and innovative aspect of Europe 2020 compared to its predecessors.

I believe that the economy and the environment are deeply inter-linked and inter-dependent. I believe that the only way to develop sustainably is through making the way our economies work sustainable. And I believe the Single Market can be a driving force for greening the economy, just as resource efficiency could revitalise the Single Market. From full and fair implementation of the environmental acquis across Europe to clear eco-labelling for European consumers, you would be surprised at how many times the effectiveness of the single market has an important impact on achieving our environmental aims.

I will consider my term as commissioner to have been a success if ministers of economy and finance talk as much about the environment as I talk about the economy and finance.

They should do.... I don't make the arguments about resource efficiency only because I think they will help meet our environmental objectives. I make them because I believe that improving our resource efficiency is essential to our future competitiveness and long-term prosperity.

I will give you the economic arguments for this in a moment, but I am sure that you can already see the political attractiveness of this approach. We are moving from the old polemics between environmentalists and business, to a pragmatic realisation by environmentalists that the economy is part of the solution for the environment, and by business that the economy is a wholly owned subsidiary of the environment.

So what is the economic rationale for resource efficiency? The most important is that current Global megatrends make resource efficient growth a necessity – in fact, an inevitability.

We will share our small planet with 9 billion people by 2050. Even more significantly, there will already be 3 billion extra middle class consumers by 2030. That is great news for those 3 billion whose living standards will rise, and great news for the businesses that will thrive on providing for their demands. But those demands will also put immense strain on many resources. And that pressure will be the most significant limiting factor on our ability to grow and provide higher living standards.

We will need three times more resources – 140 billion tons annually – by 2050. The demand for food, feed and fibre is projected to increase by 70 %. Yet already today 60 % of our ecosystems underpinning these resources are degraded. Without efficiency gains, by 2030, we will need 40 % more water than we can access.

¹ Check against delivery.

The scale and effects of increases in consumption will be hundreds of times greater than the early industrializations in Europe. The population of China today is one-hundred times greater than that of the United Kingdom during its industrial revolution, and China will achieve growth levels in 10 years that took the UK one-hundred years. So we are talking about a resource shock that will be 1000 times greater ... And that is just China.

The resource scarcities and pressures that will result from the consumption of these massive middle classes will be a constraint on growth for us all. We must prepare if we are to remain competitive, and to continue to raise our living standards.

That is why the overarching objective of our resource efficiency policies is to decouple resource use and its impacts from economic growth. Of course that requires changes in our behaviour as producers and consumers, and that in turn requires a wide approach across many policy areas and policy instruments, and particularly it requires the implication of the private sector.

Most of those policy competencies are in the hands of the national governments. That is one of the reasons I was keen to speak to you today. We have to take the resource efficiency agenda to national capitals and regions.

The European Semester process under Europe 2020, and the annual National Reform Programmes will be central to delivering resource efficiency. I would appeal to the national parliamentarians here today to keep a close eye on the actions of your governments in responding to the Commission's Annual Growth Survey. For 2012 for example we have called for the elimination of environmentally harmful subsidies, and for a shift in taxation from labour to pollution and resource use.

More generally the longer term interest in transforming our economies to a resource efficient growth path is clear. Higher resource prices mean it is those that use them more productively that will have the competitive advantages.

But this does not mean that in times of financial crisis and austerity we cannot afford the luxury of thinking about longer term sustainability.

There is also a strong short-term economic rationale to resource efficiency. European companies are leading in many of the green technologies that will be needed to bring about the transition, and the global markets for water and waste management, for renewable energies and recycling are growing fast.

And on a more local level there is enormous and immediate potential for stimulating investment and new jobs in environmental sectors. Just take waste, for example. A report we have just published calculates that full implementation of the existing waste legislation by Member States would create 40,000 jobs and save € 72 billion a year compared to non-implementation.

Recent reports from the German and UK governments have also identified huge savings and benefits to be reaped at little cost and in very short payback periods. These are not so much low-hanging fruit as "rotting fruit" that should have already been picked.

As with energy efficiency, the initial investment costs for the private sector can be significant. But many companies already realise the inevitability that they will need to make them, and our main task as policy makers is therefore to ensure we give the predictability and clarity needed to enable those investments to take place. Making those investments sooner rather than later will mean less dislocation and fewer losers.

As parliamentarians your daily bread and butter is legislation. And as I'm sure you know, we have quite comprehensive legislation at Community level in the environmental sphere. It has been the basis of our approach to environment over the last 30 years and it has provided our citizens with cleaner water and cleaner air. It has curbed the excesses and punished the polluters. But the resource efficiency approach recognises that end-of-pipe legislation is never going to be enough. Especially if we don't implement it properly.

Legislation still has an important role to play, in providing the right incentives and targets. But our behaviour, as producers and consumers, depends on many factors and we have to use many policy tools. In November we explained what tools we believe are necessary in our "Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe":

We propose a mix of market-based policy instruments to provide the right signals and incentives, remove barriers and address market failures.

Some of those tools aim at making the single market for green products and services work better.

Greening the Single Market

At the end of this year we will publish a communication on Greening the Single Market. We just closed (on 3rd April) a public consultation exploring different policy options.

We need to create a single market where environmental information is comparable and flows freely. We cannot expect producers or consumers to act rationally and efficiently in their use of resources if they do not understand the value or fragility of those resources, either through market signals or through other sources of information.

Common benchmarks would make it easier for companies to understand their performance within their sector, or their products' performance within a product group, and also realise improvement potentials throughout the value chain. Front-runners in this area can already testify to the huge potential: for example, by implementing Life Cycle Management principles, 3M has saved over 1.2 billion dollars over 30 years.

Those front runners – dynamic companies at the top of supply chains – make increasing demands on the smaller companies that provide them with components, materials and services. We need to provide those SMEs with the information and tools to meet those demands, by helping them measure the life-cycle costs and effects of their products and their production processes.

Consumers also need clear and credible information. It is estimated that there are about 400 different environmental labels around the world. The Monti report recognised that this proliferation of separate national initiatives is a bottleneck to the Single Market. It confuses, and leads to public cynicism about green claims and assumptions of green-washing. Add the thousands of private labels and logos and confusions reigns!

We need to establish clear criteria for measuring the life-cycle performance of products and services and communicating this to consumers. If we can increase trust in green claims we will reward the best performers and trigger more innovation, growth and jobs in green sectors, and better environmental performance in all industries.

That is why the Commission is already working on a proposal for a life cycle assessment-based methodology and an accompanying policy. We announced this in the Communication calling for a Single Market Act, as the 10th specific action, leading to the development of a common methodology for the environmental footprinting of products. We will make more detailed proposals for this at the end of this year in our communication on Greening the Single Market.

Such a footprinting methodology would lead to a common, reliable basis for assessing and communicating the life cycle environmental performance of products in the Single Market. The real value and potential of such a tool is by applying it via existing policies:

- As the basis for reliable information to consumers on the green credentials of products;
- As the basis for Green Public Procurement criteria;
- As the basis for establishing eco-design specifications
- As the basis for directing public support to improving performance where it most matters.

In this way we can make sure that we reward the best, and take the worst off the market; making the green single market a reality.

Creating a level playing field

Legislation is not much use if it is not implemented. As legislators I am sure you could be the first to agree. Non-implementation is also unfair, and leads to distortion of markets.

Last month the Commission looked at this in some depth in a Communication setting out how we believe we must meet the challenges of implementing the environmental acquis.

National parliaments can help secure those benefits in several ways.

First of all, they can help complete the transposition process on time. It is disappointing, for example, that many Member States missed the transposition deadline for the new Waste Framework Directive – one of the instruments that can help deliver those 400,000 jobs I referred to earlier. Delays mean uncertainty for investors and stakeholders and undermine the level playing field.

Second, national parliaments can help design national implementing rules that best fit the challenges within the Member State concerned. One technique that the March Communication advocates is building-in good information systems from the outset so that implementation can be efficiently tracked.

Third, national parliaments have an essential role in monitoring to make sure that the right results are delivered. The March Communication focuses on good knowledge about implementation and a high degree of responsiveness to any problems or challenges that present themselves. Citizens shouldn't need to write to Brussels because of a lack of remedies at national level. That is why we suggest strengthening national systems.

Honourable ladies and gentlemen, your role as national parliamentarians is fundamental to developing a truly integrated approach to achieving resource efficient growth, to developing an efficient single market for green products and services, and for ensuring full and effective implementation of environmental legislation. It is therefore a particular pleasure to speak to you and I look forward to hearing you.

Ms Kroes, Vice-President of the European Commission responsible for the Digital Agenda
*Investing in our digital future*¹

Ladies and Gentlemen

These days, no political discussion can ignore the economy. It's the dominant topic in Brussels and in your national capitals.

I am convinced that the time for endless discussion is over; we need action. We should stop debating the importance of growth: but identify and support the things that can deliver it.

My message is simple: to think about the future economy, you must take account of the digital revolution.

In short, the Internet is changing our economy, changing our opportunities, and changing our world.

The facts are stark. The European digital Internet economy is already bigger than Belgium's national economy and growing faster than the Chinese economy. Already worth hundreds of billions of euros, in a few years, it could reach over 5% of EU GDP. In some Member States it's already higher. And by 2016, online spending could account for over one retail euro in ten.

And no wonder. Just look at what the Internet offers, and how it boosts our economy. Studies show that investment in ICT capital is among the most productive there is. It enables new ways of doing business, new ways to power productivity, new ways to innovate.

It creates five jobs for every two it displaces. It helps small companies double growth and exports. And, where broadband goes, growth follows: increasing broadband penetration by 10 percentage points translates as 1 to 1.5% on GDP. Increasingly, people realise that doing things online can save them time, money and hassle. Ever greater numbers are using an ever wider range of services. And they are increasingly willing to pay for them.

Take audiovisual. Today, half of Europeans use video-on-demand several times per week. In the USA they're already the biggest source of traffic. In the near future, innovations like Connected TV will take that yet further.

Fields like entertainment are often the fastest adopters of new technology: but other services follow in their wake.

Take healthcare. Applying ICT to health could help people stay active and independent longer, cut hospital admissions, slash mortality rates. And all for lower costs. Who, at this time of stretched budgets and ageing populations, can afford to ignore that?

And let's not forget to mention the potential of Cloud computing. It can give our businesses tools and services that are flexible, dynamic and cheap. It can drive productivity and slash IT costs, especially for SMEs. Overall it could give our economy a tremendous boost.

That's just a few examples of the benefits for our people, our public services, our economy.

But, we can't get those benefits without the right support. High-speed networks to provide bandwidth. A skilled, digitally literate workforce. And the legal framework to open up a vibrant digital Single Market.

¹ Check against delivery.

If we aren't ready to provide those, we may not be ready to capture the ICT dividend. We won't cater to people's growing thirst to do things online. And we will be doing our people, and our economy, a serious disservice.

First, broadband networks. Those services like on-demand movies, instant Cloud access, or virtual operating theatres: they all need serious bandwidth. No wonder global Internet traffic is growing fast: it has already doubled since 2010; by 2015 it will double again. While mobile traffic is growing around twice as fast.

We cannot meet this exponential demand with ageing infrastructures. They won't take us far in the new digital world.

So we need to invest in broadband. To deliver the speeds we will need in the next ten years: and to connect up those more isolated areas that are still cut off.

We have proposed over 9 billion euros for broadband and digital public services, as part of the EU's Connecting Europe Facility.

Innovative financing for broadband would lower perceived risk and attract private financing. Each euro of public resources will leverage many times more investment in ICT. And, remember, each euro invested in ICT will pay back a handsome return in tomorrow's digital economy. That's what we mean by EU added value.

Meanwhile, wireless internet is key to our competitiveness. I am not understating this development by saying that the digital future will be mobile. Europe used to be undisputed leader in wireless communication. Let's reclaim that crown.

The Radio Spectrum Policy Programme has been agreed and we've already seen investment flowing into new 4G systems. Now we must move forward with initiatives like shared access to spectrum, providing tomorrow's resources.

Second, it's not just about broadband networks: it's about human capital too.

Look at IT graduate numbers: supply is static, while demand shoots up.

At this rate, soon could come a shortfall of hundreds of thousands of IT professionals. At a time when so many are looking for work, here is one sector where labour demand outstrips supply.

Meanwhile, one in four European adults has never used the Internet at all. Maybe some are in your constituency. I can tell you that they're usually already at risk of socio-economic exclusion. If they were online, they could access new opportunities, jobs, social connections, government services. Indeed, if those people were all online and using eGovernment, taxpayers could save billions.

How to get everyone online? There's one model that I've seen working in countries from the UK to Romania: to have someone dedicated to getting everyone online. So President Barroso and I have called upon every Member State to have their own "digital champion". Someone with the profile and persistence to work with private, public and voluntary sectors - and ensure no-one is left out.

Third, to go with the broadband networks - we need legal frameworks. To create a vibrant digital Single Market.

In Europe, people already benefit from direct access to the biggest market in the world. But the economic barriers we've spent decades knocking down are reappearing in digital form. For example, people can't easily pay for goods or services across borders. Or can't identify themselves to register abroad. Or different copyright regimes mean they can't access digital downloads – not legally, anyway. I know our Danish colleagues have made this a Presidency priority. They're not the only ones. The recent European Council called unanimously to complete the digital Single Market by 2015.

And that's just what we're doing.

For example with proposals to make it easier to identify, authenticate and transact online, wherever you are in the EU. The proposal will be adopted next month. Or look at online content. I know, and we have all seen, that the people of Europe care deeply about issues like copyright. What if we showed them we can adapt to a more open era?

We are preparing proposals on copyright. But we should start by changing the attitude of public administrations themselves, and making them open up. If we unleash public sector open data, that could fuel a sector worth tens of billions – and make it easier to hold public bodies to account. I hope I can count on your support for our proposal.

I could keep you here forever with a list of what we're doing. But what we're doing is less important than why we're doing it.

So I want you to take home one message today. I know that all of you, in each of your Member States, are implementing competitiveness strategies. You're looking for ways to boost growth, to offer jobs, to improve efficiency for strained public budgets.

I'm telling you: if you support the digital economy, your strategy will be a lot easier to write. Because whatever it is you want to boost, the Internet is a tool you can't do without.

In every sector, whether it's tourism, teaching or television, small businesses and large, urban areas and rural: they're all going digital.

And in future, when a small business wants to expand, or a big company decides where to locate, they're going to look at exactly these issues. Does this place have fast broadband? Do they have workers with high-quality IT skills? Do they have a modern legal framework giving easy access to a huge market?

When they ask these questions about Europe, let's ensure they get the right answer. Let's make sure we build an e-EU.

Of course the actions we need within Europe take a variety of forms. And use a variety of levers. Some are at EU level: like promoting competitive markets, building a digital Single Market, or putting an end to mobile roaming rip-offs. For others, like e-skills, the tools are more in national hands.

But for all of them, your support and democratic scrutiny is essential. Because in all cases these actions should be pushing in the same direction, towards a digital future. With your help we can do that. Because if we want to put together a digital economy, it's no use having half of the jigsaw.

So my message to you is: be a champion for this issue within your Member State. Put ICT right in the centre of that growth strategy, and it will pay a handsome dividend.

Thank you.
