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NOTE

From: Presidency
To: Delegations

Subject: Draft Council conclusions on the "Digital Single Market Technologies and Public Services Modernisation" package

Delegations will find attached draft Council conclusions on the "Digital Single Market Technologies and Public Services Modernisation" package, with a view to the discussion by the Competitiveness and Growth Working Party at its meeting on 28 April 2016.

DRAFT COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON THE "DIGITAL SINGLE MARKET TECHNOLOGIES AND PUBLIC SERVICES MODERNISATION" PACKAGE

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

RECALLING

- the European Council's conclusions of June 2015¹, which stated that digital technologies bring immense opportunities for innovation, growth and jobs and pointed to the urgent need to tackle market fragmentation, ensure future-proof regulation, build supporting infrastructure, help the digitisation of industry, and enable our citizens to fully benefit from this technological revolution.
- the Council's Conclusions of May 2015 on the digital transformation of European industry², which called for an action plan for the digitisation of industry, emphasised that the Council should monitor progress, and stressed the importance of research, development and innovation for the digital transformation.

General

1. STRESSES the importance of digitisation in all sectors of the economy for Europe as a driver for innovation to boost its competitiveness, keep a robust scientific and industrial base and manage the transition to a smart industrial and services economy; UNDERLINES the importance of the convergence of digital and other industrial technologies for the modernisation of Europe's industry.

¹ Doc. EUCO 22/15 of 26 June 2015.

² Doc. 9340/15 of 29 May 2015.

2. WELCOMES the "Digital Single Market Technologies and Public Services Modernisation" package to promote Europe's digital innovation capacity and ensure that every industry in Europe, wherever it is situated and whatever its size or sector is, can fully benefit from digital innovations; NOTES that this requires an approach that should be predominantly industry led, and takes into account the differences between sectors, firm sizes and Member States and regions; RECOGNISES the package as an important contribution to the wider European strategy to improve competitiveness, growth and jobs, in particular for SMEs, and for the quality and efficiency of public services.

Digitising European Industry

3. WELCOMES the Commission's Communication "Digitising European industry". CALLS on the Commission to establish, together with Member States, industry and other stakeholders, a framework for facilitating coordination and cooperation of European, national and regional initiatives on digitising European industry, as well as to mobilise public and private stakeholders across the value chains; WELCOMES the Commission's initiative to set up a network of digital innovation hubs; RECOGNISES the importance of these to facilitate access to digital innovations for industry, particularly SMEs, to disseminate key digital technologies, to raise awareness of the potential of digitisation and to enhance the business environment; WELCOMES the Commission initiative to set up a thematic smart specialisation platform for industrial modernisation in June 2016.
4. ENCOURAGES the Commission to explore the role of R&D&I public private partnerships in aligning the investments made at EU, national and industry level for the further development of key digital technologies and their integration into all industrial solutions and fields; NOTES the ambitions on finance and investment within the package, and suggests for these to be further clarified; EMPHASISES the importance for them to be realistic and cost effective, and ensure a high level of European added value, whilst avoiding duplication or crowding out investments by the private sector.

5. UNDERLINES the importance of regulation to be future-proof and to stimulate and enable digital innovation to allow innovative businesses to scale-up their activities across borders throughout the EU; and HIGHLIGHTS the need to remove regulatory and non-regulatory barriers that hamper such scaling-up, with respect to both providers and users of innovative solutions. WELCOMES the Commission's intentions to clarify the emerging issues of data ownership, and access and re-use rules in particular for data generated by sensors and other collecting devices, as well as to explore the legal framework for autonomous systems and Internet of Things applications as well as apps and other non-embedded software; and NOTES the Commission's ambition to advance the Single Market for the Internet of Things.
6. UNDERLINES the importance to increase the digital talent pool of Europe, and to engage in a comprehensive dialogue of all stakeholders to address the challenges of the impact of the digital transformation of European industry on skills requirements and on the nature of work, employment levels and income distribution.

ICT Standards

7. WELCOMES the Commission's Communication "ICT Standardisation Priorities for the Digital Single Market", and the principles and priority areas there outlined; RECOGNISES the importance of an ambitious, coherent and consistent standardisation policy and of timely and industry-led standards for interoperability, for competitiveness of European industries on global markets and for creating a fully functioning Digital Single Market; WELCOMES the proposed regular dialogue with European standard organisations, industry and other key stakeholders and the Council and the European Parliament; NOTES with interest the proposal for a balanced licensing system for standard essential patents. EMPHASISES the importance of ensuring that European ICT standards are established in coordination with international standards and globally recognised technical specifications and, where possible, promoted as international standards.

Cloud

8. WELCOMES the Commission's Communication on "A European Cloud Initiative" aiming to maximise the use of big data in science, industry and public services; ACKNOWLEDGES that researchers, SMEs, Industries, and public administrations in the EU have access to world-class supercomputing, secure data storage and analysis and reliable and high speed connectivity; CALLS on the Commission, together with Member States to explore governance paths and funding possibilities to make the European Cloud Initiative a success.
9. [ACKNOWLEDGES that Europe may well benefit from a European Open Science Cloud that enables, amongst others, safe and long-term storage, efficient analysis, and user-friendly (re)use of research data across borders and disciplines; CALLS on the Commission to ensure that the governance and funding frameworks take sufficient consideration of existing initiatives and their sustainability and a European-wide level playing field.]
10. WELCOMES the ambitious goals towards a European Exascale high-performance computing (HPC) strategy; RECOGNISES the need to support the technology and build on EU strengths to develop a HPC ecosystem, in order to place the EU among the top three supercomputing powers in the world by 2022 and strengthen competitiveness; welcomes the Commission's proposal to prepare for the launch of an ambitious flagship initiative to unlock the full potential of quantum technologies and accelerate their development and take-up in commercial products.

eGovernment

11. NOTES that the EU Single Market cannot function effectively without cross-border digital public services; WELCOMES the eGovernment Action Plan 2016 - 2020 to coordinate national efforts and to launch joint actions, acknowledging that seamless cross-border and digital public services and the usage of public e-services across borders contribute to competitiveness. RECOGNISES the need for further elaboration in the Council on the eGovernment Action Plan 2016 – 2020 given its positive potential for modernising European society and economy.