Brussels, 9 January 2013

Note for the file:

Minutes of the Digital Champion meeting: 17-18 December 2012

The 3rd meeting of the Digital Champions took place in Brussels on 17-18 December 2012

Context of the meeting

The Digital Champions met for the third time in 2013. The objective of this meeting was to assess progress to date of Digital Champions in 2012 and discuss plans for 2013.

The programme has been designed to combine a number of different priorities:

- Introduction to the priorities of the work of the DG Connect in 2013
- Introduction to the work and priorities for 2013 of the European Parliament
- Introduction to different Brussels based pan-European stakeholders who may be able to work with Champions both at EU and national levels
- An operational discussion with the Champions to understand how the Commission can help support their work further.
- A session with the Commissioner in order to have a proactive/strategic discussion of the priorities for 2013.

To date, there are 21 Digital Champions appointed. There have been four recent appointments: Cyprus, Belgium, Ireland and Croatia. The Maltese Champion mandate has now expired and has been replaced by a new one.

Seventeen Champions participated in the two day meeting. Four (UK, LU, RO, IT) have sent their apologies.

The Commission hopes that Champions from Austria, Germany, Latvia, Estonia, Greece, and Spain will be appointed in 2013.

Meeting report:

On 17 December 2012, the programme included:

-Opening Reception hosted by the European Internet Foundation (EIF) in the European Parliament (17 December 2012).

Pilar DEL CASTILLO MEP welcomed the Champions to the European Parliament and explained the work of the EIF to the Digital Champions. Linda CORUGEDO STENEBERG, Director Cooperation, DG Connect welcomed the Champions to Brussels, and thanked the EIF for hosting the reception. Informal networking between MEPs, Champions and EIF members then took place. The following MEPs also attended the reception: James ELLES, Marietje SCHAAKE, Bill NEWTON DUNN, Lambert Van NISTELROOIJ.

-Dinner hosted by the European Commission, Salon des Membres, European Parliament (17 December 2012).

The dinner was chaired by Linda CORUGEDO STENEBERG, Director Cooperation, DG Connect. Lambert Van NISTELROOIJ MEP gave a speech about the European Parliament's work to support the Digital Agenda for Europe. He welcomed the interaction that the Digital Champions were having with the European Parliament and suggested that an annual meeting between Champions and MEPs, via the EIF could be helpful. He also talked about the on-going discussion between Member States on the Multiannual Financing Framework (MFF) - which would impact funding in Digital infrastructures and services and R&D (Connecting Europe Facility - CEF). He stressed that the European Parliament supported the proposed budget and the CEF funding. The Chair thanked the Champions for their work to promote the Digital Agenda. She outlined the programme for the following day and described the work undertaken to support the Champions since the meeting in Sofia. This includes the further development of the webpage (ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/digital-champions) and the general support provided to the Digital Champions in their national activities. The terms of reference of the Digital Champion Expert Group were welcomed with a few minor amendments proposed by the CY Champion. The HU Champion commented the need to for European funding to support digital services. The FR Champion commented on the need for the Europe to look at fiscal issues which act as disincentives to developing new business start-ups. The SK Champion talked about the need to focus on jobs and skills and hoped that the Commission would be interested in supporting any of these activities. The SL Champion thinks that governments need to give more access to 'open data', which could help create new business opportunities. The SL, BE and FR Champions would like the Commission to explore the possibility of developing a shared resource that would help them collect facts and data, and help them communicate it better.

-Meetings with the Commission and other stakeholders (18 December 2012)

Following the welcome from the Chairperson, Linda CORUGEDO STENEBERG, Director Cooperation, DG Connect, Robert MADELIN, Director-General, DG Connect presented the Priorities for DG Connect in 2013. Mr MADELIN set out the challenges for the European Union and the digital agenda in 2013. His focus is making sure that policies matter to the citizens. He presented the three priorities which are to secure funding to be able to support the digital infrastructure and services, develop policies that will ensure that the digital economy helps transform the European Union and finally, to make sure that the digital world is a responsible, safe and open place in which citizens can operate.

The Commission will focus on growth and jobs and web-based entrepreneurship, e-books, and the Commission will push Member States to prioritise the Digital Agenda.

Governance of the internet and open data will be of importance in 2013 as well as the security of the web. On better internet for kids, the Commission is pushing a non-regulatory agenda to promote best practice. Mr MADELIN asked Champions to recommend what was important for them in this set of priorities and suggest potential female Young Advisors who could be considered for Commissioner KROES' Young Advisor Expert Group (given the shortage of female candidates following the first call).

LT Champion asked about the types of projects that will be funded in CEF. SL Champion asked about open government data initiative – which is extremely important for digital services movement because, allows commercial providers and NGOs do business better, reuse etc. Mr MADELIN confirmed that the objective is to open up the use of data the issue was how to legislate for it. The PSI directive is being revised which will determine how data can be re-used.

HU Champion would like to know how to measure results. On growth and jobs, it is very difficult to convince citizens and the finance Ministry that ICT is a horizontal sector that can help everywhere. CEF important but is it more important to set up infrastructure ('easier' to measure and set up) than services (perhaps more needed today?). In addition, the 100 MB/s target is not relevant in Hungary.

Mr MADELIN concluded the session by announcing that the mid-term review of the Digital agenda (adopted 18 December 2012) would help to reset the debate in a specific country context. The role of Champions will be to help the Commission tailor the debate to your country needs (e.g. if not 100 MB/s then what?). Is 30 MB/s for some areas more important than a 100 and will they be able to do what they want with that? E.g. tertiary education)

Following Mr MADELIN's introduction, the following presentations were made:

Anna KRZYZANOWSKA; Head of Unit (B5) presented the DG's work on Connecting Europe Facility.

Megan RICHARDS, Director for Coordination presented DG Connect's work on the grand coalition on jobs and Horizon 2020. A major conference on jobs and growth will be organised in March 2013.

Paul TIMMERS, Director for Sustainability and a Secure Future presented the DG's work on Sustainable and secure future (E-government, e-health, e-sustainability, security)

Franco ACCORDINO, Head of the Digital Futures task force, presented the DG's work on Digital Futures in 2050

Following that short presentations were made by:

- Startup Weekend -Deborah Rippol European Coordinator
- Telecentres Europe Mara Jakobsone, Chair, Telecentre-Europe
- **Digitalmuse.org** Cheryl Miller, Founder

Discussion with Vice-President Kroes and Digital Champions: Discussion: Rebuilding Europe's economy by getting every European Digital in 2013 – what more can we achieve together?

VP KROES welcomed the Champions and presented her priorities. At the moment, she is trying to get governments to do more to tackle youth unemployment. Her role is to give hope to European citizens that there is a way out of this crisis. This is why Champions are such an important component of her strategy and therefore are of critical importance to her work. She invited Champions to take the floor and present the initiatives that they have been working on.

PT Champion is trying to make Europe an attractive place to work and stop Europeans leaving to work in third countries. He sees the number of jobs in ICT grow from 700 million to 4000 million in 5 years. In Portugal, they are working on a way of using ICT to improve tax collection as 'grey market' is killing the PT economy. Also, people are building their own jobs – not waiting for corporations to hire them.

PL Champion presented different programmes underway in Poland (Lighthouse keepers). He is also promoting the setting up of enterprises online – there used to be EC action in this area and it would be useful to renew it. What would be helpful is a unified identification/branding of digital champions, in order to push for a logo, to underline the European aspect of the Digital Champion role.

SE Champion: In Sweden, 89% are regular users (rather than measuring the 'never' or 'don'ts'). Of these 11% who do not use the internet, 4% because it's expensive; 5% not accessible; 19% says it's complicated, 67% are not interested - a total of 800 000 people. He explained that he set up a charity which involved getting 1 person to sponsor another person online.

SL Champion presented an initiative to get over 65 years old on line. It is intergenerational and involves the help of 12-14 year old family members to help their grandparents take advantage of the internet.

BE Champion is promoting an intergenerational work place. As a recently appointed Champion, she would like to know what the role of the Digital Champions should be and how long should it last— beyond 2 years? She needs support from the Commission to build trust in order to spread best practice and convince ministers that the only way to move forward in this period of constraints is to do more rather than less with ICT

The DK Champion explained that getting people online is not a problem but getting them to use IT services is more difficult. A digital society by default has started, but now he is working to deliver services that work which will deliver better education/healthcare.

The NL Champion is prioritising digital skills and safety and will share the programme it is developing with other Champions. She is trying to encourage entrepreneurs in health and education. For her, people offline are actually illiterate overall. On average people spend 4h /day on the Internet (work days) but also during the weekend.

The DK and FI Champions visited the NL Champion in November – to explain that going digital is a must – in the NL it's a 'right'. It was a very interesting exchange.

The CY Champion welcomed the initiative and provided comments to the Terms of References of the expert group which were accepted in part by the Commission. He explained that his challenge is to promote increased internet penetration, targeting all population groups. He intends to undertake initiatives to explain to people the benefits of using the Internet, help people acquire e-skills and gain access to the Internet.

FI Champion explained that FI has a huge legacy to build on. Open source comes from Finland etc. linux, mysql, 'Angry birds' (Rovio) now and more. There is an ecosystem forming around these companies and there is also a 'way of working' which is building. Finland does not want to copy the US – it is ok to leave on time! But now we need to develop the skills to attract people to work in FI.

The FR Champion explained that despite the crisis - 1 out of 3 companies looking to recruit the right talent / skills. Co-creation, coeducation are the way forward – there is concern that EU privacy law could destroy companies. Financing the innovation is key and tax rules need to attract entrepreneurship - French companies are moving out of Europe because of difficult fiscal rules currently in place in France.

The MT Champion is focussing on digital rights of EU citizens which are scattered or eroding. Laws being introduced are often stifling. The internet will need people – and we need to make regulation/laws that allow Internet freedom and protect citizen's rights.

The BG Champion in focussing on education and follow Finland's leads – She would like to set up an innovative teacher's advisory board to encourage teachers to do things differently. She is also focussing on Entrepreneurship – and will run a 'start up week' in February 2013. She is still campaigning for free Wifi across BG. One city (Pleven) is going to adopt this approach and all public buildings will provide free wi-fi to its citizens. On the Digital Agenda, she has met the Prime Minister to encourage him to make this a priority and asked the Commissioner to reinforce this message too.

The HU Champion is struggling with 45% of the population are digital illiterates. He is also working to train more professionals to improve their e-skills.

The CZ Champion is focussing on e-government. The government is developing orchestrated services - eg for e-health and e-justice. They will evaluate and measure e-gov services in a qualitative way to establish ways of improving take-up of services. He will also pursue the idea of inter-generational strategy to get people online and develop e-skills.

The LI Champion also supports intergenerational cross learning. He is worried to see the 33% off line because of lack of access (fibre and libraries) and because connections are slow. He would appreciate the EC visiting Lithuania to help support his work.

Conclusions by Vice President KROES:

Neelie KROES wants to promote an entrepreneurial climate in the EU. She wants to inspire countries, organisations and people to share knowledge not ring-fence it for 'fear' of competition, which in fact stifles productivity.

Copyright is on her agenda and the Commission is launching a structured stakeholder's dialogue on six copyright topics.

In 2013, the Commission is organising other activities where it would like Digital Champions to be involved:

- Young advisors meeting (date to be confirmed)
- Grand coalition for jobs (4-5 March 2013)
- Girls/Women and ICT event: Brussels, 25 April 2013
- Digital Agenda Assembly: Dublin, 18-20 June 2013
- ICT 2013: Vilnius, 6 November 2013
- Digital Champion meeting, Brussels, December 2013 (date to be confirmed)

-Participants:

- Gilles Babinet (France)
- Ales Spetic (Slovenia)
- António Murta (Portugal)
- Linda Liukas (Finland)
- Tineke Netelenbos (NL)
- Jan Gulliksen (Sweden)
- Gergana Passy (Bulgaria)
- Kestutis Juškevičius (Lithuania)
- Ondrej Felix (Czech Republic
- Peter Pellegrini (Slovakia)
- Antonio Ghio (Malta)
- Lars Frelle-Petersen (Denmark)
- István Erényi (Hungary)
- Wlodek Marcinski (Poland)
- Darko. Paric (Croatia)
- Dr. Stelios Himonas. (Cyprus)
- Saskia Van Uffelen (Belgium)

Other participants:

- Maria Rosa Gibellini, European Internet Foundation
- Deborah Rippol, European Coordinator at Startup Weekend
- Anca Foster, Eastern Europe Operations Manager at Startup Weekend (accompanying Deborah Rippol)
- Mara Jakobsone, Chair, Telecentre-Europe
- Laure Lemaire, Director of Interface 3, Belgium ((accompanying Mara Jakobsone)
- Cheryl Miller, Digitalmuse
- Angela Steen, Google (accompanying Cheryl Miller)

Advisors:

- Boris Miškovič (advisor to Mr Pellegrini)
- Marie Wessel (Advisor to Mr Frelle-Petersen)
- Hellen Kist (Advisor to Ms Netelenbos)

Apologies:

- Martha Lane Fox (UK)
- Björn Ottersten (Luxembourg)
- Roberto Sambuco (Italy)
- Paul-André Baran (Romania)

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