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European Affairs Committee

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Opinion on the Commission White Paper on Modernising ICT Standardisation in the EU - The Way Forward - COM (2009) 0324 11 September 2009

Dear Ms Reding,

We hereby enclose the consultation responses from the Danish Parliament's European Affairs Committee on the Commission White Paper on Modernising ICT Standardisation in the EU.

The European Affairs Committee has held two meetings to discuss the White Paper and at its meeting on 11 September 2009 it adopted the opinion below unanimously.

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Opinion on the Commission White Paper on Modernising ICT Standardisation in the EU

The European Affairs Committee overall supports the more effective and flexible standardisation processes within the IT sector as it will benefit productivity, competition and innovation. At the same time, it will also benefit consumers, who it is hoped will experience better interoperability between various ICT applications. This is wholly in line with our desire for greater openness and transparency.

The Committee can also endorse the proposal for setting up a permanent platform of experts to advise the Commission and ensure better integration of the stakeholders involved.

The proposals will promote competition and innovation in the field of ICT by improving the opportunities for referring to common international standards that can be incorporated into future legislation and public procurement. The Committee considers that the standards of other consortia and fora should be incorporated with thorough consideration of the requirements of openness and transparency. However, consideration should also be given to the fact that some of the fora for standardisation are dominated by individual enterprises.

The Committee is therefore concerned as to whether the attributes for standards mentioned in point 2.1. will be complied with by the more limited standardisation fora with specific economic interests.

The Committee fully supports:

- reviewing the rules on public procurement, so that public authorities can more easily identify the technical requirements and standards for procurement;
- fostering better synergy between research, innovation and standardisation in order to ensure fast and effective updating of the standards;
- ICT standards developing organisations coming up with transparent and balanced policies for weighing intellectual property rights;
- a new, permanent platform, in which all stakeholders participate and can act as expert advisers.

The Committee has reservations about:

- the possibility of applying standards from fora and consortia other than the European standardisation organisations.

The European Affairs Committee considers it important when shaping and modernising ICT standards to take particular account of administrative burdens, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises, regions and local authorities, which may have to bear a considerable administrative and financial burden if the standards become obligatory. Such burdens must be taken into account when calculating the benefits of introducing the standards. This is the case for instance with public procurement, where enterprises can find themselves forced to observe the standards.

If the conclusion is that there are social benefits to introducing ICT standards, small and medium-sized enterprises ought to be compensated for the administrative and financial burden inflicted upon them.

Yours sincerely,

Anne-Marie Meldgaard
Chair of the European Affairs Committee