



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Camera dei Deputati for its Opinion on the Communication "Digitising European Industry - Reaping the full benefits of a Digital Single Market" {COM(2016) 180}. The Commission welcomes the Camera dei Deputati's overall support and is pleased to have this opportunity to address the issues raised in the Opinion.

Creating a truly connected Digital Single Market (DSM) is one of the top priorities of the Commission. The challenge ahead is for European industry to seize fully the digital opportunities. This is essential to ensure Europe's competitiveness with implications for overall welfare. The Communication is one stepping stone for a strengthened industrial base, to stimulate investment in new technologies, improve the business environment, ease access to markets and to finance, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and ensure that workers have the skills industry needs. The Commission would like to see the development of national platforms on digitising industry in each Member State and supports and welcomes Italy's steps in this regard.

The Communication is part of a comprehensive package of measures and initiatives. The Commission is pleased to provide more detailed clarifications of the various strands towards the political objectives of this Commission in the Annex. The success of this approach will depend on the joint mobilisation of the necessary financial resources and the use of EU financial support to leverage public and private investments. Only relying on EU investments will not be enough to reach our ambitious goals, and it will be necessary to mobilise cohesion funds, national, regional and private investments.

The Commission hopes that these clarifications address the issues raised by the Camera dei Deputati and looks forward to continuing our political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President*

*Andrus Ansip
Vice-President*

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Annex

The Commission has carefully considered each of the issues raised by the Camera dei Deputati in its Opinion and is pleased to offer the following clarifications:

a-e) Under the Communication on Digitising European Industry framework, the Commission recognised the need for world-class European infrastructures, not only network but also cloud and data infrastructures. For this reason, it was adopted alongside a Communication on a European Cloud Initiative. Furthermore, the Commission has continuously been working on proposals to encourage investments in very high-capacity networks and accelerate the roll-out of 5G wireless technology and free Wi-Fi access points in public spaces. The recently adopted connectivity package on telecoms review¹ is an example of a comprehensive approach to seize all the opportunities made available by the broad digitalisation of our economy. Moreover, the Commission has also been working with financial institutions in the banking and non-banking sector to achieve a critical mass of investments. This is the case of the European Fund for Strategic Investments as well as the Capital Markets Union.

f) The Communication outlines the governance of the Digitising European Industry (DEI) initiative, and in particular Roundtables bringing together the representatives of the Member States' initiatives as well as industry leaders and social partners.

A first Roundtable took place on 20 September 2016 with high-level representatives from the Ministries in charge of digital strategy for industry, from the national platforms where they exist and from the governing boards of the Horizon2020 Public-Private Partnerships. There was a broad welcome for a European Platform of National Initiatives on Digitisation. It forms part of the overall coordination framework of the DEI initiative. This European Platform will be a core mechanism to ensure Member States', Regions' and private sector commitment to achieving the DEI goals. This includes setting out detailed objectives and targets to be realised collectively, the efficient articulation between digitisation strategies at EU, Member States and regional level as well as the pooling of resources and co-investments when needed. The Commission is also working on the development of a monitoring scoreboard of the digitisation of industry across the EU as well as the level of investments by industry and Member States in target key technology areas identified by industry in the context of Private-Public Partnerships (PPPs).

While the overall orientations will be defined and monitored in the Roundtables, the detailed implementation will be developed in the specific mission-oriented Working Groups (WGs). These are a key part of the governance and aim at making progress on all four lines of the Strategy. They will ensure the integration of the various work strands and the concrete involvement of the Member States, including regions, and industry in the detailed implementation and effective the delivery of the actions in between Roundtables.

¹ COM(2016) 587 final.

g-h) The Commission welcomes the Italian initiative to digitise Italian industry which was made public on 21 September 2016. The announcement came at a moment when the Commission announced the ambitions of a European platform of national initiatives and the need for ambitious policy strategies for digitising industry across the whole of Europe. This took place during the Roundtable with high-level representatives of Member States and of national platforms held on 20 September 2016. Indeed, a key measure in the EU strategy is to foster the development of national platforms for the digital transformation of industry and the establishment of a coordination framework between EU and national actions so that we ensure critical mass of effort, avoid fragmentation and support the development of a digital single market.

i) Italy's strategy on digitising industry is very well aligned with the Communication Digitising European Industry and comes with a comprehensive package from research and innovation to skills development, with a sizeable amount of financial incentives, including tax measures, all of which show that Italy intends to be a major player on the European scene. The Commission looks forward to the fiscal stability law to make it a reality.

j) The Commission has adopted various measures in order to support SMEs in their digital transformation and strengthen industry's overall competitiveness. For example, a measure foresees the investment of EUR 500 million from the European Research and Innovation (R&I) Framework Programme in Digital Innovation Hubs (DIHs) so that every industry, large or small, high-tech or not, can get access to knowledge and testing facilities in the latest digital technologies. These centres of excellence would be based in technical universities or research organisations and should provide companies, in particular SMEs, with access to facilities for digital innovation; supply advice on potential sources of funding or finance; make available spaces for testing and experimentation; and help workers find the necessary skills and training. In order to scale up these measures, significant regional and national investments in creating and expanding centres of excellence are essential.

k) Digital skills are one of the cornerstones of a well-functioning Digital Single Market. Under the New Skills Agenda for Europe² presented in June 2016, the Commission set out steps to improve digital skills in Europe through the Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition. The Coalition calls on Member States to develop comprehensive digital skills' strategies by mid-2017, and stakeholders to establish national digital skills coalitions.

l) The Commission has shown through several programmes how alignments of regional, national and EU strategies are feasible and can draw considerable public and private investment, and achieve ground-breaking impact on competitiveness. The Commission encourages the use of public procurement to further support the Research and Innovation development across the EU.

² COM(2016) 381/2.