



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 17.5.2016

C(2016) 847 final

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Senat for its Opinion on the Communication "A Digital Single Market Strategy for Europe" {COM(2015) 192 final}.

Taking the right steps towards an improvement and growth of the European Union's Digital Single Market is one of the top priorities for the Commission's current term. As the Senat rightly points out in its Opinion, the important objectives of this strategy will be to facilitate the cross-border access to online goods and services, to improve networks and digital services as well as to promote the growth of the EU's digital economy.

The Commission takes seriously the concerns and suggestions expressed by the Senat. The implementation of the Digital Single Market Strategy is currently in its early stages with several public consultations inter alia on geo-blocking and platforms having been completed only at the end of 2015. We are looking forward to a further dialogue with the Senat based on the results of the public consultations which can be expected in the first half of 2016. The Commission values the Senat's early engagement at this stage of the policy making process and will take its Opinion and other contributions received into account when coming forward with draft measures addressing the problem of geo-blocking and in the context of its comprehensive assessment on the role of platforms, which are both due in the first half of 2016. Furthermore, any legislative initiatives that may be tabled in the context of the Digital Single Market Strategy will, as usual, be transmitted to the Senat and discussed in detail with the co-legislators in accordance with the Treaties.

The Commission also takes note of the Senat's interest on its data and cloud initiatives. These initiatives will tackle restrictions on the free movement of data and unjustified restrictions on the location of data for storage or processing purposes. Cloud providers will need to comply with the recently strengthened EU legislative framework for the protection of personal data (General Data Protection Regulation) as well as with rules on network and information security (NIS Directive); the European Cloud initiative will assess what further measures are needed for cloud solutions to be used by public, private and scientific users in the EU.

*Mr Călin POPESCU-TĂRICEANU
President of the Senat
Calea 13 Septembrie nr. 1-3, sector 5
RO – 050711 BUCHAREST*

As concerns the Senat's suggestions regarding eHealth, we would like to draw the Senat's attention to the 2012-2020 eHealth Action Plan. Its overall aim is to address the barriers for the full deployment of cross-border eHealth systems and to improve healthcare for the benefit of patients by giving patients more control of their care, bringing down healthcare costs and unlocking innovation in health markets. Currently the Commission is conducting an intermediate evaluation of the Action Plan to identify areas in which more in-depth actions should be taken. We will take due note of the Senat's suggestion in that context.

Concerning the Senat's suggestions on State aid, a key aim of the Digital Single Market Strategy is to establish a supportive investment climate for digital networks, research and innovative business. Achieving our ambitions in this area will require significant investment. EU funding is already earmarked for Digital Single Market infrastructures and services as well as for research and innovation. Complementing current EU programmes, the European Fund for Strategic Investment is designed to support a wide range of digital projects.

In addition, various actions of the Horizon 2020 programme aim to support research and innovation that provide opportunities also in the digital area. Furthermore, the E-government Action Plan seeks to promote the various aspects of digitalisation of public administrations in the EU.

The Commission hopes that the clarifications provided in this reply address the issues raised by the Senat and looks forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President*

*Günther Oettinger
Member of the Commission*