

The President • Le Président

Mr Andrus Ansip
European Commission
Vice-President for the Digital Single Market
European Commission
Rue de la Loi, 200
B-1049 Brussels

Brussels, 25 February 2015

Subject: Follow-up on our meeting on 5 February

Dear Vice-President Ansip,

Allow me to thank you - also on behalf of EUROCHAMBRES Deputy President, Martha Schultz, Vice Presidents Michl Ebner and Constantine Michalos and Secretary-General, Arnaldo Abruzzini - for the very interesting meeting on 5 February. I trust that our discussion will mark the beginning of a fruitful cooperation between EUROCHAMBRES and you and your services during the next mandate. In this letter, I would like to follow up on some of the issues that we discussed.

Many of the Chambers' members are small & medium sized enterprises, even micro businesses. Nowadays, even the smallest and youngest businesses have the potential to be multinationals thanks to digital technology. Chambers are adapting their services and support to the needs and expectations of this new generation of members. Public administrations and public policy must respond too and, reflecting this, the '**digital by default**' premise should underpin the Digital Single Market package that you are due to present in the spring.

Regrettably, there are many examples of established EU and national policy measures that are not fit for the digital era. Some, arguably, were not even fit for the analogue era, but their unsuitability is exacerbated due to the speed with which the digital economy evolves.

We need an internal market and global business framework that is fit for the digital era. That doesn't just mean addressing technological obstacles, it also means **re-evaluation of a wide range of legislative requirements from a digital perspective**, such as fiscal regimes, company law, labour mobility rules, licences, standards, dispute resolution, consumer protection and trade.

We therefore very much welcome your cross-cutting role as Vice-President for the Digital Single Market, which reflects the need to ensure that existing and future policy from across the administration's services is fit for purpose.

Trust in the single digital market is critical for businesses. The implementation of the recently adopted **eIDAS Regulation** should be closely monitored to ensure that it realises its potential in creating an interoperable safe space for a connected digital Europe. Electronic trust also represents a market in which European businesses have quietly gained global leadership.

The European Commission could help capitalise on this position by acting as an ambassador for Europe's knowledge in this area, for example by facilitating the recognition of eIDAS based services and products by neighbouring countries.

We also discussed the importance of **e-government as a catalyst for digital advancement** and a way to simplify administrative procedures, particularly for businesses. There are certainly European success stories in this field, not least the innovative developments that you oversaw as Prime Minister of Estonia. However, there are also many member states that lag far behind. This is becoming increasingly apparent to EUROCHAMBRES as we support DG GROWTH in assessing the effectiveness of the Services Directive's **Points of Single Contact (PSCs)**. These are supposed to be one stop shops where service providers can acquire all of the information they need and complete all required procedures online in order to trade domestically or cross-border. We would be happy to discuss the final results of the PSC assessment in the spring, but initial indications suggest that it will corroborate previous feedback from Chambers that many PSCs are under-performing or incomplete.

It is regrettable that the PSCs are in very few cases proving a catalyst for administrative reform and e-government improvement. The rest seem to be little more than an online directory of enduringly unnecessary and burdensome information requirements and compliance procedures. The PSCs, as with all e-government services aimed at businesses, must be designed from the end users' perspective rather than the administrations'. This is a process that national Chambers and their members would be pleased to contribute to. We very much hope that you and Commissioner Bieńkowska will oversee radical improvements.

Of course, the **European Commission itself must lead by example** if it wants administrations across the EU to simplify and digitalize their processes. Its own procedures, in our experience, remain far from digital. Some directorates-general are more advanced than others, but EUROCHAMBRES is often still obliged to submit responses to calls for tender or proposals on paper, sometimes in triplicate and with vast numbers of annexes. We are also routinely required to re-submit administrative, financial or legal information that has already been provided during previous tender processes. We remain available to provide specific examples of such burdensome requirements if it would help you instigate improvements.

I remain at your disposal for any further information and input that you require and reiterate EUROCHAMBRES' willingness and availability to actively contribute to a better functioning digital single market.

Yours sincerely,



Richard Weber