

## **Digital Single Market - GL BELGIUM 2015 – 11 June 2015**

### **1. Brief description of the event/meeting(s):**

The event took place on Thursday 11 June 2015 in the offices of the Commission Representation in Belgium (Rond-Point Shuman 12). See hereby the link to the [programme](#) and the link to the [list](#) of participants.

We received full support from the Commission Representation office in Belgium that dealt with the logistics of the event including the networking lunch.

Nadege DEFREERE, Commission representative to the EU (DG COMM) welcomed the participants on behalf of the Commission.

The Belgian Digital Champion, Mrs Saskia VAN UFFELEN (SvU, CEO of Ericsson BELUX) acted as the master of ceremony and provided a presentation on the changes needed in terms of behaviour and values in the new Digital age

Other speakers included:

- Nicole DEWANDRE (ND), Advisor to the DG in DG CONNECT, 2015 GL co-ambassador for Belgium who provided an overview of the DSM together with a review of the Digital Agenda Scoreboard for Belgium.
- Alexander RIEDL (AR), Deputy HoU of CNECT/F4 who concentrated on the societal dimension and Belgium's Digital Skills' challenges.
- Emmanuel PIETERS (EP), Director for the Digital Agenda, Telecommunications and postal services at the Cabinet of Minister Alexander De Croo who provided a short overview of “Digital Belgium” that was recently launched.

The rest of the Going Local Team for Belgium introduced themselves and were present to answer the questions and for the networking lunch:

- Dirk BEERNAERTS, advisor to the Director General
- Katleen ENGELBOSCH, HoU CNECT/R4 and co-ambassador for the 2015 GL in Belgium
- Philippe GERARD, Deputy HoU, CNECT/B
- Olivier FUEG, Policy officer and Belgium desk in CNECT/B
- Lionel SOLA, coordinator for relations with the EP in CNECT/D2

In addition, for the Belgian side, there was also:

- Patrick LAMOT, advisor on Research and Innovation issues in the Belgian PermRep.

In advance of the meeting, 2 preparatory meetings took place in-house with all the colleagues involved (CNECT and COMM). A preparatory meeting took also place with Kris BOEYKENS and Marc JANSSEN, representatives from the Belgian Ministry of Economy, SME's and Energy in order to discuss the logistics, topics, speakers, format and potential participants to the event.

## 2. Key findings

Saskia Van Uffelen's main statements related to the following (see hereby the link to the [presentation](#)):

- Our main challenges are to expand the number of those with digital skills and to **avoid a digital divide**, between the people who are connected and those who are not.
- The emerging digital era and the increased digital connectivity call for a **change in behaviour and values and communication**: digital is not only for certain market segments or customers, nor for the young generation only; 15 billion connected devices in the world are impacting each of us.
- DSM provides us the elements for building a **successful future**.
- The **Infrastructure** is important but not sufficient; we need **new business models** adapted to the needs of citizens, consumers, businesses, leading to a networked society. Who will pay to undertake this revolution? It is time for a joint new innovative collaborative network.
- "I want to see actions on DSM in all sectors". We should not discuss if it is important or essential but **when we will start**. Going Local is appropriate starting point to make digital revolution a reality.
- **Safety for internet for kids** and **cybersecurity** are very important: we should take ethical on-line behaviour more seriously.
- **Need to speed up digital** as we are 20 years behind Sweden.
- Up to 65% of all occupations could disappear by 2020. Training is needed to allow managing this transition.
- We need to dare taking **risks** and take investments in order to be **innovative**.
- **Education sector** is not adapting quickly enough. School masters are not trained in change management.

Nicole Dewandre on the Commission's proposal for a DSM package (see hereby the link to the [presentation](#)):

- The ICT segment of the economy is the heart of the growth dynamics. It also has an impact on **societal qualitative aspects**. The blurring of online vs. offline worlds brings us in a hyper-connected era.
- This implies a **rethinking of values and concepts: freedom, identity, responsibility** etc.
- **BE - 5th in Scoreboard** High performing group is DE, FI, NL, and SE. BE: 1<sup>st</sup> as to connectivity. 8<sup>th</sup> in terms of Human Capital. 7<sup>th</sup> in the use of internet. 5<sup>th</sup> in the integration of digital technologies. 12<sup>th</sup> in terms of Digital public services.
- Gave snapshot of **DSM strategy, 3 pillars, 16 measures and the GL action in all MS**.
- **Roadmap:** new proposals in the next 18 months, Digital Assembly in Riga, discussions in Council and Parliament with presentation of Belgian players in this institutional context.

Alexander Riedl focussed on digital skills and jobs, education and training (see hereby the link to the [presentation](#)).

- BE has a **serious digital skills challenge** (37 % of Belgians have low digital skills) in particular as the nature of the jobs will change drastically.
- The Belgian economy relies heavily on digital skills but there will be **30.000 unfilled vacancies for ICT experts in Europe in 2020**. Messages on better collaboration between business, education and training providers.
- Improve skills forecasting and **adapt curricula**.
- Motivate **young people** to go for digital tech.
- Provide more relevant training for **adults**.
- Education and learning - update curricula, bring in digital learning, boost teacher training, support courses on digital creativity and bring digital into school
- Better use of national and EU funds.

Emmanuel Pieters focused on the Digital agenda in Belgium - [www.digitalbelgium.be](http://www.digitalbelgium.be) (see hereby the link to the [presentation](#))

- **An ambitious Digital agenda for BE** recently launched with Key measurable indicators; BE does not want to miss the train of the digital era.
- Growth and Job **potential of the digital era in BE is huge**. But we need a match between growth and new **skills**.
- BE has for the first time a Minister for Digital Agenda (like in the EU).
- BE drew lessons from Neelie and DA Europe - avoid a big number of small actions. Therefore, articulate the agenda around **5 pillars**:
  - **Digital economy**: start up plan, inventory of legislative obstacles and digital compatible legislation; a special fiscal regime; the recent launch of the ecommerce platform; e-invoicing, e-signature and electronic archiving, Digital Health Valley
  - **Digital infrastructure**: ultrafast internet, dynamic Post and Telecom market, digital hub for companies. BE has a good international ranking. But BE cannot rest on its laurels. Ambitious objectives are needed in that context.
  - **Skills and employment**: Coalition for digital skills and jobs with focus on digital inclusion and 4 age groups: a) for the young: coding and digital skills, reference to CDJ; b) for primary and secondary schools: training and support from consulting bodies for school directors; curriculum changes as of September 2015; alignment of financial investment with infrastructure plans; c) Students: internship in companies for 14 months; d) rest of life: re-training; inclusion, mobile internet.
  - **Confidence and security**: BE is about to establish its cybersecurity centre, actions against illegal content with a balanced approach are essential, as well as alternative dispute resolution mechanisms. New centre will shortly be launched in Brussels.
  - **Digital government**: public digital services for citizens and business by default, open data by default, operational efficiency. Belgium is rich in terms of collaborative structures.

## Questions & Answers' session

- A person intervened to reiterate that Belgium is not only famous for chocolate and beers but that BE also was the first to have an electronic ID card.
- The BE education system is very slow in taking up digital because parents and teachers are not well skilled. Where in Europe can we get inspiration and best practices for making schools and universities ready for the digital era?
- Bernard DUBUISSON (eWBS) BE e-gov agency; we are building a data system to be able to monitor for ex number of students available in future according to their specialisation and thus connect education and industry. How manage transformation of jobs/skills. Digital means jobs are lost, not only manual jobs e.g. project manager. A data strategy is needed to have a picture of future needs Business is worried. A new competition strategy needs to be built into new business plans.
- Marc VAN THOURNOUT from IPCF e-invoicing platform wants to make sure that the economic rules also apply to digital world. e.g. Uber and taxi vert. The 'Uberification' of the economy creates opportunities. The new model will push the old ones to innovate.
- How is the cooperation between federal and regional levels in Belgium on the Belgian Digital agenda (Nadege DEFREERE).
- A person representing Business Belgium; the take up of digital low in particular a lack of technical solutions; will publish 10 points of what business has to do. Need for simple mobile identification and signature solutions and efficient electronic addresses for companies in BE.
- During the networking lunch, participants asked questions about the DSM and its building blocks. This was also the occasion to receive informal feedback on Digital Belgium. One comment was that this fairly high level document still had to be turned into specific action. Specific telecom dossiers were also raised with the colleagues concerned, including plans for a new tax on mobile antennas in Brussels which appears at odds with the aims of Belgium Digital.

### 3. Communication activities

#### Press activities

- Regarding press activities, an invitation was sent out to our contacts, but Belgian news & European CELAC summit overshadowed the event, which was, in any case more, more targeted at stakeholders.
- No press attended the event, but information and presentations were sent to them.
- On 3 June, an interview with VP Ansip on the DSM initiative was published in one of the main daily: *Le Soir* and helped to raise the profile of the initiative in Belgian media.

#### Social media activities

- The Representation of the European Commission in Belgium has been active before and during the event on **Facebook** and **Twitter**.
- On **Facebook**, 4 days after the event, 740 people had seen a short video interview with the Belgian Digital Champion, Saskia Van Uffelen (and 740 saw it in their newsfeed). This is one of the most viewed posts on the Representation Facebook's page.



- Regarding **Twitter**, The Rep was active both before and during the event.
- Online engagement prior to the GL event: links to EU digital Agenda & Digital Single market, Digital Agenda in Belgium and in Wallonia, Digital Champion & EC digital advisor, the Digital4EU platform

### Before the event:

On 4th of June (number quoted is number of people who view the tweet in their newsfeed)



### During the event:

Live tweets during the info session (difficulties due to absence of Wi-Fi and low 3G connexion in the premises) with quotes, points discussed from the main speakers by REP, connect & SPP team (e.g.):



 **EC Representation BE** @EU4BE · 22 h 273  
#Belgium is 1st on connectivity @NicoleDewandre  
#DESI2015 #DigitalAgenda @digitalagendaBE  
[Voir les détails du Tweet](#)

 **EC Representation BE** @EU4BE · 22 h 230  
#DESI2015 : #Belgique se classe en 5e position parmi les  
28 EM de #UE @NicoleDewandre #DigitalAgenda  
@digitalagendaBE pic.twitter.com/wrZcVn1T8  
[Voir les détails du Tweet](#)

 **EC Representation BE** @EU4BE · 22 h 555  
It is not a question of is it essential. The real question is  
when do we start? Action is needed @VUSaskia  
#DigitalSingleMarket  
[Voir les détails du Tweet](#)

 EC Representation BE a Retweeted  
 **Lionel Sola** @Lionelsola · 20 h  
Comparing EU & Belgium digital plans. @NicoleDewandre presenting  
#DigitalSingleMarket. Ideas welcome on #Digital4EU



[Voir la photo](#)

 EC Representation BE a Retweeted  
 **Marie Frenay** @MaFrenay · 21 h  
Salle comble pour discuter des agendas numériques belge &  
européen. Bien joué @EU4BEI #DigitalSingleMarket goes local



[Voir la photo](#)

(plus Retweets from Saskia Van Uffelen, Nicole Dewandre, Marie Frenay, Team @EU\_Commission / @DigitalAgendaEU / #DigitalSingleMarket, Jimmy Jamar)



#### **4 Follow-up and next steps**

Newt steps are already planned in order to continue the “Going local exercise”.

Mid-September, Philippe Gerard (DG CNECT) will talk to all the Belgian “Europe Direct” representatives who are directly in contact with citizens.

On 15 September, VP Ansip will have a hearing with the Belgian Federal Parliament.