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*Committee on Industry, Research and Energy*

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**2012/2030(INI)**

10.9.2012

# **OPINION**

of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy

for the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection

on completing the Digital Single Market  
(2012/2030(INI))

Rapporteur: Aldo Patriciello

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## SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Industry, Research and Energy calls on the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Stresses that internet services are offered on a cross-border scale, and that accordingly they require concerted action in line with the Digital Agenda for Europe;
2. Points out that a European market with nearly 500 million people connected to high-speed broadband would act as a spearhead for the development of the internal market; stresses the need to connect the digital agenda with the provision of new services such as e-trade, e-health, e-learning, e-banking and e-government services;
3. Recalls that a Digital Single Market where services can flow freely within a market of 500 million consumers is a crucial driver for competitiveness and economic growth, providing highly-qualified jobs and facilitating the EU's convergence into a knowledge-driven economy;
4. Emphasises that broadband and the internet are important drivers for economic growth, the knowledge society, job creation, innovation and European competitiveness, as well as boosting online commerce and services; stresses that consumers and businesses need broadband access to take full advantage of the internet;
5. Points out that more competition, transparency with regard to traffic management and quality of service, as well as ease of switching, are among the minimum necessary conditions to ensure net neutrality; reiterates its support for an open Internet where content and individual commercial services cannot be blocked; recalls the recent findings by the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC) and considers that additional measures are needed to ensure net neutrality;
6. Re-emphasizes potential challenges when departing from network neutrality, including anticompetitive behaviour, blockage of innovation, restriction of freedom of expression, lack of consumer awareness and infringement of privacy, and the fact that the lack of net neutrality hurts businesses, consumers and society as a whole;
7. Stresses the importance for the development of the European Digital Single Market of continuing efforts aimed at providing ubiquitous and high-speed access for all consumers, through the promotion of access to fixed and mobile internet and the deployment of next-generation infrastructure; emphasises that this requires policies that promote access on competitive terms;
8. Stresses that achieving a fully operational Digital Single Market requires a coordinated effort to ensure that all citizens, regardless of their age, location, education and gender, have access to the internet and the necessary skills to use it;
9. Urges the Commission and the Member States to provide new impetus to the European fast and ultra-fast broadband strategy by updating the relevant targets;

10. Insists that digital competences are crucial for the development of a competitive Digital Single Market and that all Europeans should be empowered with the appropriate digital skills; emphasises the essential commitment to reduce digital literacy and competence gaps by half by 2015;
11. Recognises the need to create ways of enhancing citizens' trust and confidence in the online environment and to guarantee protection of personal data and privacy and freedom of expression and information, including the removal of geographical, technical and organisational barriers in redress mechanisms;
12. Believes firmly that the protection of privacy not only constitutes a core value of the European Union but, in addition, plays a central role in promoting the necessary user confidence in the digital environment to enable the Digital Single Market to fully develop; welcomes, therefore, the Commission's proposals to adapt the Data Protection Directive to the current digital environment, thereby promoting the innovative character of the online environment and boosting the development of promising new technologies such as cloud computing;
13. Stresses that online markets should be as flexible as possible in order to create better business and development opportunities in this sector;
14. Calls for an integrated European market for card, internet and mobile payments; calls, at the same time, for a facilitated framework for e-invoicing; stresses in both these regards the importance of interoperability and open standards so as to facilitate maximum market potential and competition;
15. Stresses that a well-functioning digital economy is imperative for a well-functioning EU economy; notes, however, that the free movement of digital services is currently severely hindered by fragmented rules at national level, where businesses face many barriers to selling across borders in the European Union, mainly because of the different regulations applicable at Member State level in areas such as consumer protection, VAT, product-specific regulations and payment transactions; calls on the EU institutions to reinforce their commitment to removing the key regulatory obstacles to cross-border online transactions by 2015; calls on the Commission to continue to propose targeted legislative action to address key impediments;
16. Emphasises the importance of 'one-stop-shops' for VAT in order to facilitate cross-border e-commerce for SMEs and promote e-invoicing; points out, however, that such 'one-stop shops' should be created only within the framework of existing institutions, without increasing the burden on the tax-payer;
17. Welcomes the European Commission's legislative proposal for a regulation on electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions in the internal market, which, by covering mutual recognition and acceptance at EU level of notified electronic identification schemes, has the potential to enable secure and seamless electronic interactions between businesses, citizens and public authorities, thereby increasing the effectiveness of public and private online services, e-business and electronic commerce in the EU;

18. Emphasizes the importance of a harmonised approach to exceptions and limitations in the field of copyright, as well as harmonised statutory exceptions to trademarks and patents, often for the benefit of researchers and developers, to facilitate the development, deployment and consumer uptake of new, innovative services and ensure the legal certainty for researching teams, innovators, artists and users required for a prospering European digital environment to emerge;
19. Stresses the urgent need for the EU to provide business and consumers with confidence and the means to trade online in order to increase cross-border trade; therefore calls for the simplification of licensing systems and the creation of an efficient framework for copyright;
20. Agrees with the Commission that the current legal framework provided by the e-commerce directive requires no review; however, underlines the need for further clarification with a view to the implementation of notice-and-action procedures to deal with illegal content;
21. Emphasises the potential value for consumers and businesses of the digital switchover of public services and calls on Member States to develop national plans for the digital switchover of public services, which should include targets and measures for getting all public services online and accessible by 2015;
22. Points out that the public sector's use of information and communication technologies is the cornerstone for the development of the digital and knowledge society, and therefore urges the Commission and the Member States to further develop secure and effective e-services; notes, particularly where e-identification and e-signatures are concerned, that cross-border interoperability is a prerequisite for the adoption of cross-border e-invoicing solutions;
23. In its resolution of 20 April 2012 on a competitive digital single market – e-government as a spearhead, the European Parliament stresses the importance of legal certainty, a clear technical environment and open and interoperable e-invoicing solutions based on common legal requirements, business processes and technical standards in order to facilitate mass adoption;
24. Points to the need to continue working on the regulatory harmonisation of intellectual property rights, whilst respecting citizens' rights and freedoms, in order to facilitate the completion of the Digital Single Market;
25. Calls on the Commission to assess the need to lay down uniform, open European Union standards for e-identification and e-signatures;
26. Notes that the major obstacles to cross-border access to the electronic services provided by public administrations are linked to the use of electronic signatures and identification and the non-compatibility of e-government systems at EU level; welcomes the Commission proposal for a regulation on electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions in the internal market;
27. Calls on the Member States to draw up cyber-incident contingency plans to cope with

cyber-disruptions or cyber-attacks with cross-border relevance, including European and national critical information infrastructure plans, and to develop strategies for a more resilient and reliable infrastructure; stresses that international cooperation in this area should be intensified; recalls that network and information security is the responsibility of all stakeholders, including users at home, service providers and product developers; recommends encouraging cyber-security-related training and education for both citizens and professionals;

28. Emphasises that the internet is increasingly being used on mobile devices and calls for action to ensure increased radio spectrum availability for the mobile internet and to improve the quality of the e-services provided on these mobile devices; the future allocation of radio spectrum must pave the way for European leadership in wireless applications and new services in order to boost European growth and global competitiveness;
29. Notes that both fixed and mobile data traffic is growing exponentially and that a number of actions, such as further harmonised spectrum allocations for wireless broadband, increased spectrum efficiency and a rapid roll-out of next-generation access networks, will be crucial to manage this increase;
30. Notes that assessing the need to open up the 700 MHz band for mobile data traffic is a necessary first step in order to meet future capacity requirements;
31. Recognises that high-speed networks are a prerequisite for the development of online services and economic growth; calls on the European Commission to develop world-leading digital agenda targets to ensure that Europe becomes the global leader with regard to Internet speed and connectivity; invites the Member States to further develop national broadband plans and adopt operational plans with concrete measures to implement the ambitious broadband targets, and underlines the strategic and crucial importance of the instruments proposed by the Commission in the Connecting Europe Facility;
32. Regrets that the EU is lagging behind with regard to internet connections operating on fibre; calls on Member States and the European Commission, therefore, to accelerate the spread and adoption of ultra-high-speed broadband and calls for a European strategy for large-scale deployment of FTTx ('fibre to the x');
33. Considers that, alongside consistent deployment of ICT, it is essential for the development of the Digital Single Market to promote ICT research excellence and foster public and private investment in high-risk, collaborative ICT research and innovation; stresses that Europe should be at the leading edge in the development of internet technologies and standards; proposes that the upcoming financial perspectives and the Horizon 2020 programme substantially increase the EU's ICT research budget;
34. Notes that the rapid deployment of ultra-fast broadband is crucial for Europe's global competitiveness, the development of European productivity and the emergence of new and small enterprises that can be leaders in different sectors, for example health care, manufacturing and the services industry;
35. Calls for specific measures to be taken to ensure that SMEs can fully enjoy the potential

of broadband in the fields of e-commerce and e-procurement; calls on the Commission to support Member States' initiatives to develop e-skills in SMEs and to stimulate innovative, internet-based business models through the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP) and its future successor, the Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and SMEs (COSME);

36. Recognises the major potential of cloud computing and calls on the Commission to propose without delay a European strategy on cloud computing;
37. Calls on the Commission and Member States to develop information technology training programmes regarding consumer rights, obligations and risks in connection with the internal digital market.

## RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

<b>Date adopted</b>	3.9.2012
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 35 -: 1 0: 0
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Amelia Andersdotter, Jean-Pierre Audy, Ivo Belet, Bendt Bendtsen, Maria Da Graça Carvalho, Jürgen Creutzmann, Brian Crowley, Pilar del Castillo Vera, Gaston Franco, András Gyürk, Fiona Hall, Jacky Hénin, Edit Herczog, Romana Jordan, Krišjānis Kariņš, Lena Kolarska-Bobińska, Béla Kovács, Jaroslav Paška, Vittorio Prodi, Herbert Reul, Jens Rohde, Paul Rübig, Amalia Sartori, Francisco Sosa Wagner, Evžen Tošenovský, Ioannis A. Tsoukalas, Marita Ulvskog, Vladimir Urutchev, Kathleen Van Brempt
<b>Substitute(s) present for the final vote</b>	Ioan Enciu, Françoise Grossetête, Roger Helmer, Marian-Jean Marinescu, Zofija Mazej Kukovič, Vladimír Remek, Silvia-Adriana Ţicău