

Digital single market: creating opportunities for European companies

Could creating a digital single market in the EU and removing barriers online help give a boost to European companies? The European Commission outlined its strategy on 6 May, while it will also feature on the agenda of the European Council on 25-26 June. Meanwhile the Parliament is planning to respond with an own-initiative report on the digital market. They debated the issue on 19 May, during which MEPs highlighted the challenges and potential benefits involved.

Andrus Ansip, the commissioner responsible for the digital single market, started off the debate by saying the proposed strategy should help to prepare Europe for "a bright digital future". He added that the initiatives must be taken together as a package: "If we only succeed in putting half of them into effect then we will not end up with a true digital single market."

French EPP member Françoise Grossetête noted that the digital single market should spur growth in all member states. "Either Europe gets on board or it simply becomes a digital colony," she said. "We shouldn't just be consuming in Europe, we should be creators."

While supporting the strategy, Estonian S&D member Marju Lauristin warned that new skills would need to be created: "There are huge opportunities but there are huge risks."

"Unlocking the benefits is key to driving competitiveness, jobs and growth. The Commission strategy is good in parts but needs more work in others," said UK ECR member Vicky Ford. "The digital market is a global market and building a fortress around Europe will not work."

Czech ALDE member Dita Charanzová said: "[The strategy] should do even more to create a level-playing field for all European businesses, especially small and medium-sized enterprises, which have to pay a lot to sell beyond their national borders."

"Innovation is crucial to the European economy and the internet has got to be part of that," said Dutch GUE/NGL member Dennis de Jong. "We have to ensure that the internet remains a free and open forum."

"We heard about the better access for the consumers to goods and services but not a word at all about democracy or about access to knowledge," said Austrian Greens/EFA member Michel Reimon.

"Currently only 7% of Europe's small and medium-sized enterprises sell products abroad and only 15% of consumers buy online in a different country," said Italian EFDD member David Borrelli. "It's obvious that there is a long way to go."

Mylène Troszczynski, a non-attached member from France, criticised the Commission for focussing on removing national barriers. "You show open contempt for nations and people," she said.

Find out more

[Video of the debate](#)

[Press release: committee chairs welcome proposal on digital single market \(6 May 2015\)](#)

[Commission press release on the digital single market \(6 May 2015\)](#)

[From geo-blocking to cloud computing: Parliament's guide to the digital age \(5 May 2015\)](#)



Top (from left): Andrus Ansip, Françoise Grossetête, Marju Lauristin. Middle: Vicky Ford, Dita Charanzová, Dennis de Jong. Bottom: Michel Reimon, David Borrelli, Mylène Troszczynski.



Digital single market: can it fulfil expectations?

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Europe goes digital

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