

BIJLAGE 1

Dear President Tusk,

The global digital economy is rapidly transforming virtually every economic sector. To ensure that Europe remains a global leader, governments need to create the right conditions for a flourishing digital economy. This cannot be achieved without an integrated digital single market. The European Commission's Digital Single Market Strategy is the main tool to break down the regulatory walls between 28 different national regimes and to ensure innovation and investment. The Commission has published a significant number of the 16 announced initiatives of the strategy.

As a result of this, the Netherlands Presidency organised a working lunch on 26 May 2016 during which Ministers of the Competitiveness Council and the Telecommunications Council jointly discussed the key factors that will enable timely, ambitious and efficient implementation of the strategy's initiatives. Political commitment from the highest level is essential for the relevant Councils formations to proceed ambitiously. Therefore, I would like to share the main findings of this debate with you ahead of the June European Council, which aims to adopt an agenda for the implementation of all aspects of the single market.

Given the broad impact of digitisation, Ministers welcomed the opportunity to meet in a joint setting. They expressed a strong commitment to a timely and ambitious implementation of the Digital Single Market Strategy. This includes a coherent approach, as all initiatives are strongly interconnected. Ministers were explicit that there is no time to waste for Europe in readying itself for the digital age. As our global competitors will not wait for us to finalise negotiations, an integrated digital single market will be vital for Europe's global competitiveness position. Therefore, Ministers called for the implementation timeline to be fast-tracked.

Ministers were convinced that Europe can and should deliver ambitious results on the initiatives, based on the following horizontal conditions: (i) speedy and ambitious negotiations in the Council and with the Parliament, in order to create (ii) a coherent, simple, and future-proof borderless framework, which is (iii) innovation-enabling, digital-by-default, and based on Better Regulation principles.

In addition, Ministers underlined the importance of ensuring components that are crucial for Europe's successful adaptation to a strong digital economy. These include a solid digital infrastructure, trust and security, standards, excellent digital skills of both the ICT workforce and citizens, as well as a high level of digital innovation and research. A borderless market supported by these assets will create the right environment for new and existing businesses to develop and scale up.

In conclusion, the debate showed that there is a clear sense of urgency among Ministers to join forces in order for Europe to lead in global digital innovation. The cross-cutting nature of the digital single market requires political guidance on and commitment to our common direction. Therefore, I would like to call upon the European Council to pronounce its strong commitment to a timely and ambitious implementation of the Digital Single Market Strategy based on the aforementioned elements.

Yours sincerely,

**Directie Europese en
Internationale Zaken**

Ons kenmerk
DEIZ / 16090724

Henk Kamp

**Directie Europese en
Internationale Zaken**

Ons kenmerk
DEIZ / 16090724