



# Digital Single Market Bulletin

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**Further Reading:** More in-depth updates and commentary on the Digital Single Market agenda is available at:

[https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/digital-single-market\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/digital-single-market_en)

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## D9+ event takes place in Tallinn, Estonia

Mr John Dooley, Head of the EU Digital Single Market and Digital Economy Unit at DBEI, and Ms Frances Kiernan, Irish Ambassador to Estonia, attended the Ministerial level meeting of Digital 9+ (D9+) countries in Tallinn on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2018. The meeting concentrated on the future of the Digital Single Market in the context of the upcoming European Parliament elections and the new Commission taking up office in 2019.



*Mr John Dooley pictured with the Estonian Minister of Entrepreneurship and Information Technology, Mr Rene Tammist, and Ms Frances Kiernan*

The focus of the D9+ group is on delivering strategic oversight on the optimal application of digital policy and acting as a forum for exchange of best practice. Eight of the D9 countries (Sweden, Finland, Denmark, UK, Ireland, the Netherlands, Luxemburg and Estonia) attended – with Belgium absent – alongside the two D9+ countries (Poland and the Czech Republic).

There were three contributions at the meeting from Lisbon Council Research; Public First and Google; and the European Commission.

Lisbon Council Research stressed the imminence of a transformative fourth industrial revolution. In the last five years, a series of game-changing technologies have emerged, including blockchain, artificial intelligence, crypto-currencies, and quantum computing. Now is the moment to reflect on how these should shape the next iteration of the digital single market and how this political momentum will carry us into the next decade.

Public First and Google presented the results of a survey based on consultations with leading industry players across D9+ countries. Participants were asked about future digital and tech policy, and how the opportunities of digital can be maximised for European citizens and businesses in the coming years. In particular, their presentation considered the overarching context for digital policy in Europe; where the

greatest opportunities and risks lie; and where reform is most urgent in the coming years.

For the European Commission, Juhan Lepassaar, Head of Cabinet for Vice President Andrus Ansip (Digital Single Market), set out that Europe loses millions of euro every year because of the non-functioning of the Digital Single Market. Steps have been taken for goods and services to start moving across borders. However, e-commerce is rising rapidly and we need to go further to make the digital market fully functional and to deploy the new technologies available. Artificial Intelligence should be the cornerstone for the future development of the Digital Single Market.

All three presentations agreed that the digital areas of the Single Market do not represent a separate part of the economy which can be ringfenced and considered in isolation, particularly when it comes to services. Rather these digital elements are integral and cross-cutting to the progression of the agendas of each individual Directorate and should be treated as such in their respective work programmes. However, because of the interconnectedness of these digital elements it will be important to monitor the implications that developments in one area have on other areas. An appropriate governance framework should be developed so these matters can be discussed and progressed.

The Commission set out three areas that they feel are important for the future from their perspective, namely:

1. The issue of the competitiveness of the EU services economy. In this regard the Commission see the deployment of Artificial Intelligence as a key way for Europe to converge with US and Chinese investment. This should be enabled by the forthcoming EU Coordinated Plan on Artificial Intelligence (AI). The Commission challenged the D9+ group to ensure that the Digital Europe Programme in the future Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-27 is prioritised and that the AI Expert Group's work on AI ethics is strong.
2. The next big questions for the new Commission will be on data, which is a key enabler for AI and in particular, the interconnected areas of data access, data ownership and data sharing. Discussions on these are still in their infancy.
3. The commitment by the Commission not to change the eCommerce Directive as the safe harbour component is essential for the sustainability and growth of the large number of smaller online platforms.

## IDC on the Digital Single Market

Minister Breen hosted the 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Inter-Departmental Committee on the Digital Single Market (DSM) on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

- At the meeting, Departmental representatives provided updates on a range of issues, including:
  - an outline of the Future Jobs initiative which seeks to build on Ireland's strong economic performance whilst addressing vulnerabilities nationally and external challenges. The desired outcomes are productivity growth, quality jobs and a resilient, innovative, open and globally connected economy;
  - a presentation on 'Digital Transformation – Assessing the impact of digitalisation on Ireland's workforce'. The purpose of this Expert Group on Future Skills Needs report is to assess the impact of digitalisation on job roles and sectors in Ireland and to identify relevant policy implications;
  - an overview of the latest iteration of the ICT Skills Action Plan. This is a plan to address the shortfall in suitably qualified graduates to meet the demands of the IT industry. Measures suggested included increasing the output from the higher education system and making adjustments to the work permits system to incentivise qualified migrant workers to take up positions in Ireland;
- an update on the National Digital Strategy (NDS) which highlighted that the response rate to date to the Public Consultation had been very positive with a wide variety of issues raised by the public, including the digital divide and youth mental health. Work on the NDS is progressing and will be supplemented by further engagement with key stakeholders;
- reports on the status of developments in relation to EU legislative proposals and negotiations on ePrivacy, Telecoms Code, Cybersecurity, Platforms to Business (P2B), Illegal online content and Digital Europe Programme (DEP).
- The Committee was also provided with an update on the European Commission's proposal for Digital Innovation Hubs (DIH's). These will form an integral part of the DEP which of itself is a part of the Commission's comprehensive response to digital transformation contained in the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) proposal for 2021 – 2027. These hubs would serve as access points to the latest digital capacities such as high-performance computing, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, as well as other innovative technologies. They would also provide access to digital skills for SMEs.

This Bulletin is issued by the EU Digital Single Market and Digital Economy Unit of the Department of Business, Enterprise & Innovation. The Unit supports the Minister of State for Trade, Employment, Business, EU Digital Single Market and Data Protection on DSM issues with the cooperation of the members of the Digital Single Market Inter-Departmental Committee.