



# THE EU AND THE DIGITAL SINGLE MARKET

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Whether you're planning a holiday, shopping, studying, watching a movie or bidding for a government contract, chances are you're using online tools to do so. More and more products and services are either online or available digitally.

Yet, despite all the barriers that the European Union has spent years bringing down, hurdles for users across Europe remain. A lot of people are missing out on the widest range of online goods and services, or from the many opportunities the internet offers. It means some internet companies and start-ups have their

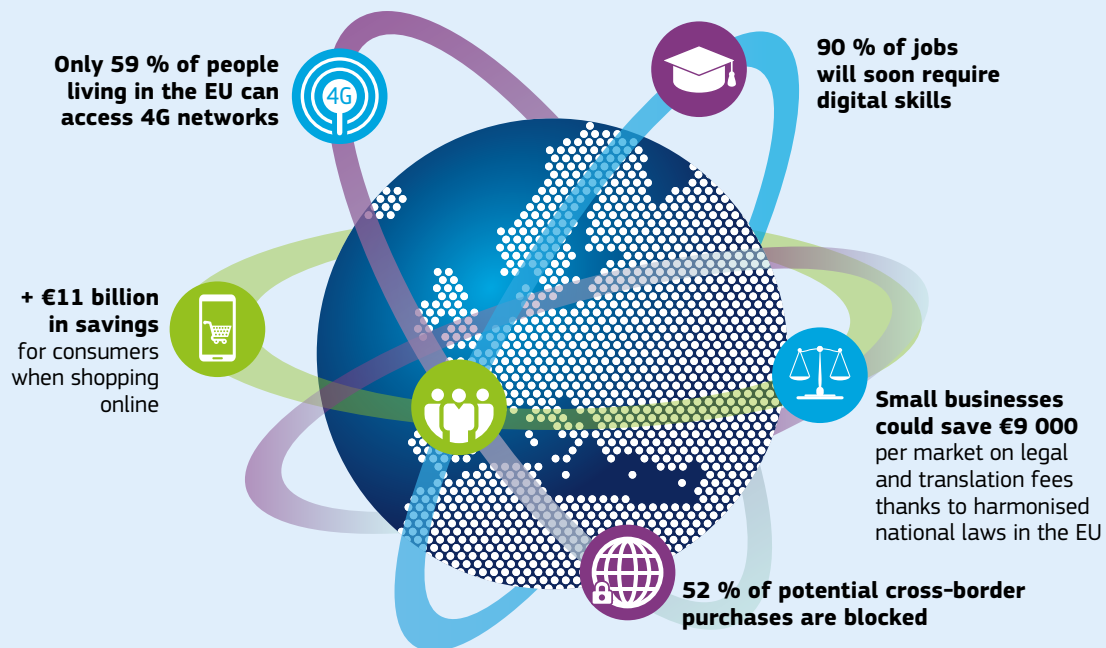
horizons limited — and cannot do business as widely as they would like, and it means numerous businesses cannot profit from high-quality digital services.

This is why the Digital Single Market in Europe is so important: it has been created to ensure equal access to products and services, to create the right environment for dynamic and safe online innovative ecosystems in Europe; and to make sure every European citizen, business and government can trust online services and benefit from the digital revolution.



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## Why do we need a digital single market?



## WHAT IS THE DIGITAL SINGLE MARKET?

The EU works towards a single market for goods and services across its territory. The Digital Single Market aims to do the same in the digital sphere by removing regulatory walls. Moving away from the current 28 national EU markets, it is a harmonised and integrated European domain without the barriers which hinder the use of digital and online technologies and services.

The Digital Single Market, a sector that covers digital marketing, e-commerce and telecommunication, is a seamless area where people and business can trade, innovate and interact legally, safely, securely, at an affordable cost, making their lives easier. It means businesses are able to fully use new

technologies; and small businesses in particular are able to cross the EU with 'just a click'. Studies show this freedom could contribute €415 billion per year to the European economy and create hundreds of thousands of new jobs.

An inclusive Digital Single Market offers opportunities for citizens too; improving access to information and culture, enhancing their job opportunities, and promoting a modern open form of government.

The completion of the Digital Single Market is vital to Europe's economic future and as such, has been identified by the European Commission as one of its 10 political priorities.

# WHAT THE EU IS DOING

Since May 2015, the European Commission has delivered on 35 action pledges announced in its **Digital Single Market strategy**. The focus is now on making all proposals in the strategy a reality for EU citizens, including above all, the updated EU telecoms rules which will boost investments in high-speed and quality networks and which are critical for the full deployment of the digital economy and society.

Two years on from the launch of the Digital Single Market strategy, the Commission is working to update the strategy to reflect new challenges and technologies. There is a great need for cyber-secure infrastructure across all parts of the EU so that everyone, everywhere, can enjoy high-speed connectivity safely. New strong EU rules for personal data protection have already been agreed upon. There is now a need to make sure that non-personal data can flow freely to assist connected cars and eHealth services. Providing high-performance computing along with a digitally skilled workforce will help the EU make the most of the data economy. All these areas are essential for Europe's digital future.

During the first half of 2017, important steps have been taken to bring the Digital Single Market closer to realisation. More steps are envisaged in the coming months:

## ➔ Goodbye roaming charges

Since 15 June 2017, you can use your mobile device when travelling in the EU, paying the same prices as at home, in other words to roam like at home, subject to operators' fair use policies. For instance, if you pay for a monthly package of minutes, SMS and data in your country, any voice call, SMS and data session you make while travelling abroad in the EU will be deducted from that volume as if you were at home, with no extra charges. This means **the end of roaming charges** as travellers have experienced them so far.

When you roam while being abroad, your operator in your home country pays the operator in the foreign country for the use of their networks. The wholesale prices paid between operators represent a cost to the home country operator and therefore impact on consumers' final bills. This is why the Commission has worked to limit wholesale roaming prices in the EU, in parallel to its work to directly limit the prices paid by the consumer.

Since 2007, the European Commission has successfully worked to reduce the consumer price of roaming. This has changed the habits of many Europeans who previously used to switch their mobile phones off while travelling. In 2013, the European Commission proposed legislation to end roaming charges for people periodically travelling in the EU. In October 2015, the European Parliament and the Council agreed on the date of 15 June 2017 for the end of roaming charges.

## DIGITAL SINGLE MARKET MID-TERM REVIEW



The agreement also foresaw a transition period and a new important decrease in prices at the end of April 2016. Already since then, when travelling in the EU, users could benefit from significant decreases in prices — 92 % for calls compared to 2007, 92 % for SMS compared to 2009, and 96 % for data compared to 2012.

## ➔ Cybersecurity

By September 2017, the Commission will review the **EU Cybersecurity Strategy** and the mandate of the European Union Agency for Network and Information Security, to align it to the new EU-wide framework on cybersecurity. The Commission will also work to propose additional measures on cyber security standards, certification and labelling to make connected objects more cyber secure.

## ➔ Online platforms

By the end of 2017, the Commission will prepare an initiative to address unfair contractual clauses and trading practices identified in platform-to-business relationships. It has also recently taken competition enforcement decisions related to this. Moreover, the removal of illegal content will be made more efficient through better coordination, interaction and ongoing dialogues with online platforms.

## ➔ The WiFi4EU initiative

The **WiFi4EU initiative** supports installing free public Wi-Fi hotspots in local communities across the EU: in public squares, piazzas, parks, hospitals and other public spaces.

The Digital Single Market strategy aims to build a fully connected Europe where everyone has access to high-quality digital networks. The WiFi4EU initiative will improve connectivity in particular where access to the internet is limited.

An overall amount of €120 million shall be assigned to fund equipment for public free Wi-Fi services in 6 000 to 8 000 municipalities across the EU by 2020.

In practice, local public authorities (municipalities or groups of municipalities) wishing to offer Wi-Fi in areas where a similar public or private offer does not yet exist will be able to apply for funding via a simple and non-

## Digital Single Market roadmap



As of **15 June 2017**, **mobile roaming charges will finally be abolished** in the EU.

35 % of Europeans travel abroad at least once a year. In 2014, 47 % of Europeans would not use mobile internet abroad because it was too costly.



As of **May 2018**, a new single set of EU rules on **data protection and privacy** in electronic communications.

This will allow people to take back control of their personal data and set clear limits on the use of their data.



As of **2020**, EU Member States will for the first time coordinate their use of the **high-quality band 700 MHz**.

This will enable 5G networks and bring new services such as connected cars, remote health care, smart cities or video streaming on the move and across borders.



As of **early 2018**, citizens will be able to **enjoy their online films, sports broadcasts, music, video games, and e-book subscriptions when travelling** in the EU.

68 % of online digital content providers block users in another Member State. 60 % of young Europeans say cross-border portability is important for taking up a subscription.



As of **May 2018**, the EU will be equipped with its first ever **common cybersecurity law** to help keep network and information systems safe in all Member States.

The EU also supports the competitiveness of its cybersecurity industry through a public-private partnership expected to generate €1.8 billion of investment by 2020 to help develop devices to defend against cyber-attacks.



If EU governments follow the Commission **e-government action plan**, they could save up to €5 billion per year as of **2020**.

The action plan seeks to simplify the life of citizens and businesses by ensuring public registers are connected and by accelerating the transition to e-procurement and e-signatures.

bureaucratic process. A grant allocated in the form of vouchers will be used to purchase and install state-of-the-art equipment for local wireless access points, while the public authority will cover the running costs of the connection itself.

### → Portability of online content

Europeans will soon be able to fully use their online subscriptions to films, sports events, e-books, video games and music services when travelling within the EU in the same way that they access them at home. This is the first step in the modernisation of **EU copyright rules** proposed by the Commission in its Digital Single Market strategy.

The new rules will become applicable in all EU Member States by the beginning of 2018, giving the providers 9 months to prepare for the application of the new rules.

The Commission is making sure that the law keeps up with consumer habits; in 2016, 64 % of Europeans used the internet to play or download games, images, films or music, increasingly through mobile devices. In a survey carried out in 2015, one in three Europeans wanted cross-border portability of the services they buy. For young people, this possibility is even more important. Half of those aged 15-39 thought that portability and accessing the service they subscribe to when travelling in Europe is important.

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