

PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Digital products and services can lead Europe back to economic growth

BRUSSELS – October 23, 2013: DIGITALEUROPE welcomes the focus on digital technologies in this week's summit of European Union heads of state and government.

The meeting is an acknowledgement of the major role technology plays in the wider economy, and a reminder that technology can act as a powerful and much needed catalyst to get Europe's economy moving again after a prolonged economic downturn.

"We fully support the European Council's efforts to regain momentum in digital products and services," said DIGITALEUROPE's director general, John Higgins.

"Europe's economy is increasingly digitally powered," he said, adding that its leaders "clearly understand what a crucial role the use of digital, data-driven innovation plays in the E.U.'s growth strategy".

"We urge Europe's leaders not to lose sight of this big economic picture," Mr Higgins said.

EU leaders will discuss a wide range of issues at their two-day summit, dubbed the Digital Summit. DIGITALEUROPE is keen to see progress across a range of issues, including the latest steps in forging a single European market for telecoms, and a one-stop-shop for data protection.

Regarding telecoms, "DIGITALEUROPE wants Europe to put radio spectrum to work as soon as possible and with the minimum of red tape so that businesses and citizens reap the benefits that network-based technologies can offer," Mr Higgins said.

The debate about a proposed data protection regulation moved forward earlier this week with a vote on amendments to the text in the civil liberties committee of the European Parliament.

The version of the proposed regulation agreed by the committee will tie up businesses in Europe in red tape and legal uncertainty, stifle the growing trend of data analytics, and drive innovation and jobs away from Europe. Much more work is needed on this vital law in order to find the right balance between protecting citizens' privacy and encouraging innovation and economic growth in Europe.

"We urge member state governments to look closely at the amendments agreed in the European Parliament's civil liberties committee on Monday before entering into negotiations with the European Parliament on a final text of the Data Protection Regulation. It is vital that Europe gets this law right," Mr Higgins said.

"There is a real risk that the drafting process will be rushed and important details will not get addressed properly. Rushing through a half-baked law risks throwing away a vital and much needed opportunity to stimulate economic growth," he added.

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About DIGITALEUROPE

DIGITALEUROPE represents the digital technology industry in Europe. Our 100+ members include some of the world's largest IT, telecoms and consumer electronics companies, as well as national industry associations from across the continent.

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