

DIGITALEUROPE is pleased to have the opportunity to contribute its ideas to the multi-stakeholder workshop on 30 April 2014, in view of the Italian Presidency of the European Union, on a new digital agenda for Europe. We offer the following opinions on some of the topics being discussed at the workshop.

1. Privacy

A robust, balanced and future-proof EU data protection framework will boost social progress, economic growth and create new jobs. Europe must create conditions that allow innovation to flourish and citizens to be confident that their personal data is respected, protected and secure.

The balanced and comprehensive framework that Europe needs would integrate a risk-based approach, a meaningful one-stop-shop principle and the abolition of the existing notification system, which would facilitate effective application of the new data protection rules for both businesses and consumers.

We need clear and distinct roles and responsibilities for controllers and processors. The free flow of data in a safe manner across international borders is needed if European companies are to have access to fast-growing markets outside the European Union.

2. Net neutrality

An open Internet is a critical underpinning of a modern, innovative, digitally-powered European single market. Rules on net neutrality must be future-proof, open enough and technology-neutral to permit the development of new services and business models.

Europe needs its network operators to innovate and offer both internet access services and other value-added specialised services. Network operators should not block, slow down, degrade or discriminate against specific content, services or applications.

Traffic management can prevent and remedy congestion, and keep networks secure. It gives priority when it is needed (e.g. medical application equipment, IPTV). Any traffic management should be transparent and have no material impact on the quality of internet access.

Competition is the best guarantee of consumers having access to an extensive choice of services at a quality they expect and a price they are willing to pay. Competition policy needs also to be the primary tool for examining markets which do not currently have specific ex-ante regulations in place.