



e-G8 FORUM

e-G8 Forum Summary

Paris, May 24-25 2011

Conversation:

Neelie Kroes, European Commissioner for the Digital Agenda, talks with **Ben Verwaayen**, CEO of Alcatel-Lucent

Key Points

- By 2013 every European citizen will have high-speed connection to the Internet. By 2015, every European should have a 30 MB connection; 100 MB connections for at least 50% of Europeans by 2020.
- Some issues require rules. They can be set by the parties. Only if the digital sector does not take up its responsibilities should political leaders step in to replace them.
- Rules should be global. There's no sense at all in individual European governments setting up national legislation on these questions.
- Message to the G8 Heads of State: Take this issue seriously. It's on your agenda now and it needs to stay there. Make decisions, implement them and keep coming back to review them. This is a wholly new era, and we're in a hurry.

Synopsis

The European Union's Digital Agenda sets ambitious goals for the 27 EU member states. To spur growth, jobs, research/ innovation, and better policies on education and other issues, the EU has promised that by 2013 every single European citizen will have high-speed connection to the Internet. By 2015, every European should have a 30 MB connection, with 100 MB connections for at least 50% of Europeans by 2020.

Yesterday's debates at the e-G8 Forum expressed passionate conviction that governments should stay out of the way. That's tempting. However, some issues do require rules of the game. Those rules can be set by the parties themselves: the EU needs to listen to business leaders, bankers, broadcasters, the telecoms and content people, and they need to take responsibility. Only if the digital sector does not take up its responsibilities should political leaders step in to replace them.



We need to take into account how incredibly rapid change is in this area; we're in a hurry and we must learn to be far more alert. We also need to realize that the rules should be global. There's no sense in the EU setting our own regulations. We need to look at this with the OECD, with the G8 and later the G20. But meanwhile, we have a single European market and it should be a digital single market. National legislation on these questions is completely pointless. It's absurd that you can't buy a movie on-line in some countries but you can in others, and it drives consumers to piracy. We need rules; we need proper remuneration for artists; but the borders should be redrawn.

To the G8 Heads of State, we need to say: Take this issue seriously. It's on your agenda now and it needs to stay there. Make decisions, implement them and keep coming back to review them. E-health, e-government, e-learning. This needs to be a daily activity of every member state.

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