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BRUSSELS

THE COMMITTEE ON THE INTERNAL MARKET AND CONSUMER
PROTECTION

WITH THE ASSOCIATION OF
THE COMMITTEE ON INDUSTRY, RESEARCH AND ENERGY
THE COMMITTEE ON CIVIL LIBERTIES, JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS
AND THE COMMITTEE ON CULTURE AND EDUCATION

HEARING OF ANDRUS ANSIP

VICE-PRESIDENT AND COMMISSIONER-DESIGNATE

(Digital Single Market)

1-002

IN THE CHAIR: VICKY FORD

Chair of the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection

(The hearing opened at 18.30)

1-003

Chair. > Welcome this evening to the hearing of Mr Andrus Ansip, Vice-President of the Commission and Commissioner-designate for the Digital Single Market. I would like to welcome members of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE), the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) and the Committee on Culture and Education (CULT), as well as the many members of the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO), which of course is the lead committee in this.

The hearing is intended to allow Members to determine the answer to two questions: is the candidate qualified to be a Member of the College, and is he qualified to carry out the particular duties assigned? In line with the guidelines for the approval of the Commission, Parliament evaluates Commissioners-designate on the basis of their general competence, European commitment and personal independence. It also assesses their knowledge of the prospective portfolio and their communication skills. We are all aware that before the hearing Mr Ansip has replied in writing to a preparatory questionnaire and the answers have been distributed to all Members in all languages. This is of course a public hearing and is being webstreamed to many outside this room so I would like to say welcome to them as well.

Just to explain the structure. The Commissioner-designate is invited to speak with an opening statement of 15 minutes and at the end there will be five minutes for a closing statement. In between there will be 45 questions from MEPs with three minutes each: one minute for the question and two minutes for the answer. I will keep everybody to time to the best of my ability. That is important.

There is interpretation in 23 languages and all speakers can use their own language. I have been requested to remind people: please do not speak too quickly for our excellent interpreters otherwise the interpreters can struggle to interpret as quickly as you are speaking. If you can speak clearly that is very helpful. I now ask Commissioner-designate Andrus Ansip for his opening presentation.

1-004

Andrus Ansip, Asepresidendi- ja volinikukandidaat. > Daamid ja härrad, kõik, kes seda kuulamist üle interneti jälgivad.

Mul on suur au olla täna teie ees digitaalse ühtse turu asepresidendi kandidaadina.

Selle prioriteetse valdkonna usaldamine minu kätte on kindlasti tunnustus minu koduriigile, mis on tuntuks saanud ka e-riigina ja mille peaminister oli mul au üheksa aastat olla.

Olen alati uskunud Euroopasse ja usun, et just selles ametis saaksin anda parima panuse Euroopa tuleviku kujundamiseks.

1-005

The world's society and economy are turning more digital every day. Digital is everywhere, not just in a handful of sectors. However, the rules, the legal environment to govern and promote this complex and evolving area have not been keeping up. Not in Europe, anyway. We do not yet have a single market that is ready for the digital age.

I certainly do not think that we should start regulating everything. But neither do I want to leave everything as it is now, because that way we cannot advance. There is no quick fix. My intention is to formulate a clear long-term strategy: to stimulate Europe's digital environment, to minimise legal uncertainty and create fair conditions for all.

I will work in close consultation with you, with my future Commission colleagues, and all parties involved. But where to begin?

For me, people are the starting point for everything: European citizens, consumers, you and me. It is where I always ask myself what Europe can do to improve people's quality of life, create jobs and prosperity.

I take this very seriously. And for most people, what they take most seriously is security and confidence that in the online world their privacy is protected. I see this as the cornerstone of the digital single market, because this underpins trust in the Internet and the entire digital economy.

Without confidence in online security, I could not have concluded last December in my capacity as Estonian Prime Minister – with Jyrki Katainen – the world's first known digitally signed intergovernmental agreement.

We have to have trust if the full value of the digital environment is to be utilised. Everybody should have the same freedoms and protection online as they do offline. They should enjoy full confidence that private data is protected and secure.

During the first six months of the Commission's mandate, I will support Commissioner-designate Jourová and work with you and the Council to finalise the reform of data protection rules. This is vital to completing a fully-functioning digital single market.

When it comes to protecting data, similar rules and safeguards should apply to all companies, wherever they are based. To be worthy of their name, safe harbours do need to be safe.

Other areas I will look at closely are cyber-security and cyber-crime – threats that no Member State or company can tackle alone. In 2012 alone, 76% of small businesses and 93% of large corporations suffered a cyber-security breach. Globally, cyber-attacks have jumped this year by an estimated 48% compared to 2013. That is nearly 120 000 attacks a day. I will promote initiatives to strengthen Europe's capacity to respond to this worldwide threat.

A digital single market has to bring more opportunities for citizens to exercise their rights as consumers, entrepreneurs and creators. To achieve this, we need to remove obstacles, tackle fragmentation, technical standards and interoperability, and sometimes heavy bureaucracy.

The Internet removes the concepts of borders, distance and time. So Europeans should not be hampered by them either, when they want to take part in Europe's digital space.

If e-commerce were to account for 15% of European retail sales – instead of the 5% it is today – the EU would gain 1.7% in annual growth, once all barriers to the single market were removed. Today, however, more than a quarter of EU Internet users have been unable to buy goods or services online, via a website based in one EU country, when they – or their credit card – are based in another.

Geo-blocking goes against the core principles of Europe's single market. If confirmed, I will work to abolish it.

But this is only one of the reasons why e-commerce in Europe, particularly cross-border, is relatively low. Similar issues concern copyright. If approved, one of my priorities will be to make sure consumers have access to content across borders.

Consumers and traders should also be able to solve disputes about online purchases in a simple, fast and low-cost way. We will make sure this is possible by launching an EU-wide Online Dispute Resolution platform by 2016.

Companies also need legal security to operate against unfair competition in a single European online environment, without having to face restrictions imposed by another EU country.

They certainly do not want to pay five times more for shipping cross-border than for domestic deliveries. That will simply stop their business from growing further.

This Parliament has been supportive in making sure that the telecom single market is established. Together with Commissioner-designate Oettinger, we will continue to push in this direction to get the maximum benefits.

I intend to work with you and the Council to abolish roaming charges for normal phone use, and to enshrine the all-important principle of net neutrality into legislation.

I believe we also need to make sure that Europe will have the infrastructure that it needs to benefit from the digital economy. But just look at 4G today: only 25% of EU citizens and 4% of the rural population can access 4G in their home. In the United States, more than 90% of citizens have 4G access. We need to create a less fragmented market to increase demand and incentivise private companies to make the necessary investments. But we also need to look at what can be done on a European basis, especially in spectrum.

A connected digital single market will create jobs. In Europe, demand for IT-related jobs is growing by around 4% a year. By 2020, we could face up to 900 000 unfilled vacancies. The importance and positive influence of the digital economy on the European workforce cannot be overestimated.

If we manage to make the single market truly digital, I believe that Europe has all the necessary assets to succeed in the global digital economy. At the moment, however, the EU's share of the global digital market is falling, while the gap between us and our competitors is rising.

Since the millennium, Europe has created 30 tech start-ups, each worth more than a billion dollars. Europe is full of creativity. Our innovative capacity, business and brainpower give us the means to lead the way: with big data, for example.

This means dealing with a fragmented market that is holding EU companies back and creating a drag on European competitiveness. It is my top priority for the next five years and will get my attention from day one.

Lastly, I would like to say a few words on something that has always been important for me: digital government and public e-services. There is no reason why a public service cannot be put online. Doing this reduces costs, makes life easier for the citizens and governments more transparent.

The Commission should lead by example and trailblaze the practical implementation of digital government. I know from personal experience that paperless government can work.

I want to make sure that the Commission accepts e-invoices and e-procurement by 2015, and e-signatures by the end of the mandate. With digitalising the wide area of public services, we are only limited by our imagination. I will work to make public services around Europe more joined-up.

I said earlier that the digital single market is not just about a few sectors. A wide variety of policies contribute to its creation. We need a cross-cutting approach to get the job done. If confirmed, my role will be to steer and coordinate this approach with the Commissioners-designate who are part of the digital single market project I will see it as my responsibility to get the most out of the different parts of the Commission – always ensuring full accountability to Parliament.

I will make sure we ‘think digital’ in all our proposals from the start. The digital aspect should not be just added on as an afterthought; it should be ‘hard-wired’ into their evolution.

I want to work closely, openly and in a climate of trust with this Parliament so that we can achieve these ambitions that I know you share with me. I will work together with all political groups. Together, I very much hope we can shape a bright digital future for Europe.

Thank you for your attention and I look forward to your questions.

1-006

Andreas Schwab (PPE). – Frau Vorsitzende, Herr Kollege Ansip, Herr designierter Kommissar! Als ehemaliger Premierminister von Estland haben Sie ja in Ihrem Land in neun Jahren als Premierminister eine ganze Reihe von elektronischen Initiativen ergriffen, die zu mehr elektronischen Geschäftstätigkeiten und zu verstärkter Anwendung elektronischer Mittel in der Verwaltung geführt haben.

Meine erste Frage bezieht sich vor allem auf die Tatsache, dass Sie nunmehr als Mitglied des Europäischen Parlaments – und wenn Sie bestätigt werden, als Mitglied der Europäischen Kommission – Ihren ehemaligen Kollegen gegenüber sitzen werden. Sie haben die *Cyber-Security*-Richtlinie angesprochen. Ich war selbst Berichterstatter, und ich darf Ihnen sagen, dass in der letzten Woche bei einem offiziellen Ratstreffen kein einziger Minister bereit war, zu diesem Treffen anzureisen, weswegen natürlich auch das Mandat, das für die Verhandlungen über die *Cyber-Security*-Richtlinie notwendig wäre, am Ende nur von Beamten gemacht wurde. Es fehlt also an dem, was Sie aus Estland berichtet haben, an der Überzeugung der

Mitgliedstaaten. Was wollen Sie tun, damit die Mitgliedstaaten den digitalen Binnenmarkt stärker als eigene Angelegenheit wahrnehmen?

1-007

Andrus Ansip, Commissioner-designate. > Thank you for your very kind words describing the situation in Estonia, but I would like to say that Estonia is not perfect enough to teach others. It is one thing to implement some digital issues in Estonia and totally another to do the same at the level of the European Union.

Cyber-security is a real threat. As I described in my opening speech, our companies and our people are suffering because of cyber-attacks and cyber-crimes. Many of the EU Member States already have their national cyber-security strategies, but some Member States still do not have these strategies. The same goes for our companies: even some large companies do not have their own cyber-security strategies. Parliament has already prepared the NIS Directive and I think it is extremely important to make this a reality.

Estonia was under cyber-attacks in 2007 and, from that time, I know how important it is to have informal cooperation between different computer emergency response teams (CERTs). Many of the attacks at that time were cut off, even some that had crossed our borders. So NIS is extremely important.

1-008

Maria João Rodrigues (S&D). – Mr Commissioner-designate, I would like you to focus on the implications of the digital economy for our industrial sector. I really believe that a new potential can be brought but we can also expect a strong impact on companies and jobs. So I would say that we need a kind of new industrial policy to deal with this.

My question is, how do you intend to deal with this impact on industrial restructuring and jobs because of this transition towards a digital economy?

1-009

Andrus Ansip, Commissioner-designate. > I believe in progress, and progress always creates more jobs than destroys those jobs. Digital will also create more jobs than it will destroy jobs. Digital is now everywhere. It is not right to talk about the digital sector, because all the economy is digital already. Digital is also supporting re-industrialisation of the European Union. As we know, the life cycle of products is shortening. Offshoring was quite popular during the years 2002–2006, but now we are talking about re-shoring already, and digital will definitely support re-shoring.

Part of creativity in our products is much bigger now than it was just ten years ago. I believe digitalisation will definitely support re-industrialisation of the European Union. Digital itself will add four per cent per year, when we will be able to create the real Digital Single Market on our growth. So we all can benefit from digitalisation.

1-010

Andrzej Duda (ECR). – Mr Commissioner-designate, your country is one of the leaders in digital development, so I have a few questions on that matter. How will you work with your colleagues in the Commission in your coordination role to break barriers down to achieve your objectives? What criteria will you use to assess what action should be taken? Will you commit to making greater use of impact assessment to assess which measures are more likely to increase

competitiveness and growth and therefore base your proposals on these areas? And last, if you could choose just one measure that you think would generate the most growth for the digital single market, what would it be?

1-011

Andrus Ansip, Commissioner-designate. > As we know, it was already proposed by many, many think-tanks five – or even ten – years ago, to organise the structure of the European Commission on the basis of clusters. Now, President-elect Jean-Claude Juncker has decided to organise and structure the Commission on the basis of clusters. Vice-Presidents will act on behalf of the President and they will coordinate in different policy areas. I think more coordination at the level of the European Commission was needed some years ago already, and it is needed even today.

During those preparatory seminars organised by the European Commission, some Directors-General who took part said look, it is working already. Here we are sitting together and discussing the same issues, about data protection, about trust, about the telecom single market, etc. As I understood, this did not happen so often – different, really good specialists from different directorates were sitting together and discussing the same issues. Impact assessments, yes, that is the basis. All the time and for all the proposals we have to prepare impact assessments and – sorry, time is over already – but skills, it is not so traditional to underline skills, digital skills for our children, this is a really important thing we have to deal with.

1-012

Dita Charanzová (ALDE). – Mr Commissioner-designate, as you can see there is broad support for the fact that Estonia, your country, is a leader in Europe in both commercial and public digital solutions and e-services. Today, however, it is not the case that we have a digital single market at EU level. You mentioned this in your introduction. It is broken up into 28 national markets, each defended by outdated protectionist policies and regulations.

You also said that Estonia is not perfect to teach others but from your national experience and your cooperation with other Member States, what national measures do you consider successful and how could you foresee bringing them to EU level with the market as it is today?

Are you in favour of coordination of national efforts or more harmonised systems across Europe?

1-013

Andrus Ansip, Commissioner-designate. > It is really as you describe right now. In fact we have in the European Union 28 different IT legislations – let us say 28 excellent but different IT regulations dealing with digital issues, and in fact those excellent regulations are creating barriers between different EU Member States. We have to tackle this issue. We have to create a real digital single market.

I do not want to talk so much about those Estonian examples. I think in all the EU Member States we can find a lot of really good examples, examples we cannot just one-to-one copy in some other Member States but to use as an example.

For example, the e-invoice – it is, not just it was. A real success story in Denmark, and now I know this is a success story also in Spain, Italy and Finland. On the level of the European Union we have to support sharing of those best practices – really good Internet-based e-solutions – and

now, as we know, on the level of the European Union, this common standard for e-invoices is set already or this is in the process, and I hope very soon in all the Member States we will use e-invoices.

1-014

Marie-Christine Vergiat (GUE/NGL). – Madame la Présidente, Monsieur Ansip, votre mandat est clair: transformer l'Europe en leader mondial des technologies de l'information et de la communication, permettre un meilleur usage du potentiel du numérique. Vous êtes l'un des promoteurs du marché unique numérique, l'homme idoine du point de vue économique, nous venons de l'entendre.

À la GUE/NGL, nous ne croyons pas aux seules vertus du marché pour régler tous les problèmes. Nous savons que le numérique est un atout, mais qu'il n'est pas sans danger, notamment pour la sécurité des citoyens, comme des entreprises d'ailleurs, la protection de leurs données, la vie privée.

Au sein de la commission des libertés civiles, de la justice et des affaires intérieures, nous ne cessons de tirer le signal d'alarme dans ce domaine, échaudés par les expériences récentes, notamment avec les États-Unis sur SWIFT, les dossiers passagers et bien sûr PRISM NSA. Les dangers, y compris en matière de cyberattaques, viennent aussi des États, et non des moindres. Au-delà des généralités que vous venez de nous énoncer, quelles mesures concrètes proposez-vous? Au-delà de la mise en œuvre du paquet sur la protection des données, quelles sont vos propositions dans le cadre de la nécessaire révision de l'accord sur la sphère de sécurité, de celle de la directive sur les télécommunications mais aussi des accords avec les pays tiers, notamment avec les États-Unis?

1-015

Andrus Ansip, Commissioner-designate. > First about the digital single market. You said that we do not believe in markets. As a Liberal, of course, I believe in markets but I do not think the market is able to solve all the problems. So I do not think the market is able to protect, for example, the weaker part of our society instead of the European Parliament. We have to do this.

As a Liberal I believe also in fundamental rights. We have to protect everybody's privacy. Data protection is a must when we are talking about digital single markets. First we have to finalise negotiations about the data protection package inside the European Union but at the same time we have to continue with those negotiations with the United States of America also.

In January, the President of the United States, Barak Obama, made a remarkable speech. He stated that all data – it does not matter whether data of Americans or others – has to be protected on equal terms. So it was a really strong political statement. We have waited for that kind of statement during the last ten years but we did not get that kind of statement from the United States during the last ten years. Now there is a clear political guideline and we will see whether Americans are able to make this guideline, this principle, a reality.

1-016

Julia Reda (Verts/ALE). – People have long been asking for more participation on Internet issues. This has been apparent, for example, in the international protests against the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA) that led to its defeat in this Parliament, and also in the huge number of replies to the Commission's copyright consultations, and lately in the many questions that Internet users have asked me to relay to you in this hearing. Unfortunately I do not

have time to ask them all directly. I am asking you instead a very simple question: are you willing to enter into this dialogue with the Internet community?

The first step would be to hold an official online hearing where people can ask their own questions about the future of the digital economy. Are you willing to take this bold step and to conduct an online hearing before the final vote on the Commission in Parliament? Are you in or are you out?

1-017

Andrus Ansip, Commissioner-designate. > As we discussed earlier, the answer is yes, I am ready to participate in those online hearings and online debates with our people.

You mentioned the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA). Personally, I supported ACTA because, according to my understanding, the idea of ACTA was good: to try to set common standards on protecting the intellectual property rights of European citizens in third countries. However, the process was awful. It was not inclusive at all, and this was why the results were as they were. So we have to learn from this ACTA case. We have to act in a much more inclusive way.

1-018

Diane James (EFDD). – You stated that protecting and developing an evolving digital economy is of pivotal importance, yet the gravest threat is one that we saw start in March of this year, continue through the summer and was denial of service on a huge scale involving Ukraine and Russia. The impact was on every level and every area of consumer life. Can you give us some reassurance as to what priority you will actually put to this whole area, what level of resource and what level of agenda in terms of your early days in your role, and can we have some specifics please?

1-019

Andrus Ansip, Commissioner-designate. > As I understood we are talking about consumer protection. In my view, in the middle of all those digital solutions, the digital single market has to stay consumer. If consumers are not well protected, if consumers – our citizens – cannot trust those innovative digital services, they will never use those services. As I said in my opening speech, people are the starting point in all the processes for me. Trust is the basis for all the digital services, so now we have many good initiatives already, which will definitely help to build trust. For example, the data protection package, the telecom single market – once again the protection of customers is on a much higher level thanks to this package – and then the common European sales law, which once again will be an additional option, but will definitely help customers and, of course, small and medium-sized businesses. Customers have to be in the middle of all the processes.

1-020

Mylène Troszczynski (NI). – Madame la Présidente, Monsieur le Commissaire désigné, le marché unique numérique a pour objectif d'élargir et de faciliter les échanges entre les différents pays de l'Union, nous l'avons bien compris. Nous savons aussi quelle est son importance. Son ambition est de créer des débouchés pour les petites et moyennes entreprises en leur facilitant l'accès aux marchés nationaux intracommunautaires. Mais, de la même manière, il va de fait favoriser la production, les achats et les approvisionnements d'autres petites et moyennes entreprises dans des pays aux coûts de production inférieurs à l'intérieur même du territoire de

l'Union européenne, notamment dans les pays de l'Est, où les coûts de la main-d'œuvre sont beaucoup plus faibles.

Ne craignez-vous donc pas qu'en abattant les dernières barrières récalcitrantes de l'achèvement du marché unique numérique notamment, le phénomène dramatique des délocalisations, qui fait tant de mal au peuple français, ne s'intensifie encore?

1-021

Andrus Ansip, Commissioner-designate. > Of course, the digital single market will support small and medium-sized companies especially. The digital single market will make life easier for small and medium-sized companies. For example, this Common European Sales Law will be an additional option. It will help small companies – family businesses, for example – to sell online or to sell to other countries. Big companies can handle 28 different regulations but for family businesses, for small and medium-sized companies, it is absolutely impossible to know what is written in those national regulations.

As I reiterated in my opening speech, fragmentation will stop their businesses growing further, so the digital single market will promote good developments for all small and medium-sized companies. It does not matter in which part of Europe they are located. I do not think the digital single market will necessarily promote the movement of jobs to the eastern part of Europe. As I said earlier, the role of arts, creativity and knowledge in products is increasing, and increasing rapidly. I do not think knowledge or art will move, with the digital single market, to the eastern part of Europe.

1-022

Ró a Gräfin von Thun und Hohenstein (PPE). – Panie Premierze! Jak mówimy o tym rynku podzielonym na 28 kawałków, to my 1 np. o zakupach internetowych i tym, co je niezwykle utrudnia, mianowicie o tych 28 systemach pocztowych w różnych krajach, które w końcu blokują handel elektroniczny. Chciałam zapytać, czy rzeczywiście się zaangażuje się Pan w to, aby i co Pan zrobi, aby stworzyć jeden wspólny rynek pocztowy, aby my mogli dobrze kupować i sprzedawać w internecie? Mniej więcej to samo dotyczy obietnic pani Kroes, że do roku 2015 czy 2016 nie będziemy już odczuwać kosztów roamingu. Czy zaangażuje się Pan w to, aby pełnić? Jeszcze nawet nie mówiąc do tego, co mówił kolega Andreas Schwab, chcemy wprowadzić ten wspólny niepodzielony rynek, to samo dotyczy prawa sprzedaży (sales law), tego 29. reżimu. Jak przekona Pan swoich kolegów z Rady, aby wypracowali wspólne rozwiązania?

1-023

Andrus Ansip, Commissioner-designate. > I agree with you. Today, for example, postal services sometimes block e-commerce. If you have to pay five times more for shipping costs you will not deliver your goods to another country because it will kill your business.

For consumers, why, for example, if the hub is located in London, are delivery costs to Glasgow much cheaper than to Brussels? The distance is shorter from London to Brussels. There are borders dividing us but, as we know, the European Union is a Union without borders. Of course we have to deal with these issues.

We have to look very carefully at the scope of the Universal Service Directive: we have to frame regulations so that people will be treated equally, so that they do not have to pay much more because of borders. I am committed to finding a good solution for our consumers, and I am sure the postal services will also be satisfied.

1-024

Evelyne Gebhardt (S&D). – Herr designierter Kommissar! Sie haben ja gesagt, dass Sie einen holistischen Anspruch haben wollen und auch sehr eng mit den anderen Kommissaren zusammenarbeiten werden, unter anderem mit Frau Jourová und Herrn Oettinger. Wie wollen Sie das ganz konkret machen? Sie haben zwar vorhin auf die Generaldirektoren verwiesen. Mich würde aber interessieren, wie die Zusammenarbeit unter den Kommissaren gestaltet werden soll.

Sie sagten auch, dass Sie die Menschen, die Verbraucher, in den Vordergrund setzen wollen. Das begrüße ich sehr. Aber wie wollen Sie das machen, in welcher Art und Weise soll das getan werden?

Außerdem haben Sie auch gesagt, dass Sie dafür sorgen wollen, dass alle Menschen in der ganzen Europäischen Union einen Zugang zum Internet, zu 4G erhalten sollen. Das ist auch ganz wichtig, nicht nur für die Verbraucher, sondern es ist auch für kleine und mittlere Unternehmen auf dem flachen Land unheimlich wichtig. In welcher Art und Weise wollen Sie das machen? Wollen Sie die Mitgliedstaaten darin unterstützen?

1-025

Andrus Ansip, Commissioner-designate. > How will we cooperate in the European Commission, especially Vice-Presidents with Commissioners? I have worked as Prime Minister of Estonia for the last nine years. In Estonia we always had coalition governments, and as a condition of coalition governments you have always to find consensus. If you start holding votes, you will immediately have to start finding new coalition partners.

I am too old to change my behaviour; I will continue in the same way in the European Commission too. The role of Vice-Presidents is to steer and coordinate. The role of Commissioners is a little bit different: to organise and to manage. So, the role of Vice-President is more horizontal; the role of Commissioner is more vertical. Those are supplementary roles and I would like to say both of those roles are needed.

1-026

Timothy Kirkhope (ECR). – Commissioner-designate, my question relates to the recent European Court of Justice hearing on the right to be forgotten. How do you believe the EU should shape policy in this area, particularly with regard to the fight against crime and terrorism, and the impact upon businesses in implementing the Court's decision? Where do you believe the boundary falls between individual privacy and freedom of speech? And do you believe that the right to be forgotten is a right for all or is it an exception for a few?

1-027

Andrus Ansip, Commissioner-designate. > According to my understanding, politicians do not have to hope that their words or actions they will be forgotten. It is nothing to do with politicians when we are talking about this right to be forgotten. They will remember, and this is good for democracy. The European Court of Justice did not say that everybody has a right to be forgotten, but – as we know – it was written in our legislation already ten or even more years ago that data protection is needed for concrete data personal issues for a concrete time, and after that it is not allowed to collect that data any more or to have that data. I think this right to be forgotten has to stay as an exception, and the real issue is how to find this right balance between freedom of expression and protection of everybody's privacy. This will be a real case-by-case study and, once again, not a rule for politicians.

1-028

Robert Rochefort (ALDE). – Madame la Présidente, Monsieur Ansip, nous voulons tous le développement du numérique, du commerce électronique, qui peut apporter beaucoup de choses nouvelles et intéressantes pour les consommateurs, pour les PME et surtout aussi de façon transfrontalière.

Maintenant, ce commerce électronique numérique qui se développera est aussi porteur de nouvelles pratiques commerciales qui sont critiquables et même souvent déloyales. Je pense aux publicités cachées via des réseaux sociaux, aux faux consommateurs qui donnent des avis, aux sites de comparaison tendancieux, à l'utilisation abusive des données personnelles et en particulier à ce qu'on appelle *l'IP tracking*.

L'Union possède actuellement une directive contre les pratiques commerciales déloyales qui est le principal outil pour protéger les consommateurs contre ces phénomènes. Pensez-vous que cet outil est suffisant à l'ère du numérique ou pensez-vous qu'un autre outil législatif est nécessaire pour renforcer la lutte contre ces nouvelles pratiques? Si tel est le cas, lequel? Comment comptez-vous améliorer les choses concrètement?

1-029

Andrus Ansip, Commissioner-designate. > Is it sufficient? No, I do not think so. If problems really exist then it is not sufficient, we have to do more to protect our citizens, to protect our customers.

E-commerce is not just a fancy thing for today and maybe for the next year too; it will stay and it will stay for a very long period of time. E-commerce has just a 5% share of the whole of retail sales now but I am absolutely sure e-commerce s share will increase rapidly.

We have to create a really business-friendly and customer-friendly environment for e-commerce. So-called dynamic pricing is, of course, not acceptable. If you have to pay the highest price because they are attacking just your IP address, it is no pleasure at all.

Of course if they are making some proposals, for example they propose new music you really like, tracking your IP addresses, then we all we are quite happy about that but I do not understand those people who say I do not care about those privacies, I have nothing to hide. If you are ready to pay the highest price then of course you do not care. But I think that in the European Parliament, in the European Commission we have to care.

1-030

Cornelia Ernst (GUE/NGL). – Ich möchte Ihnen eine Frage stellen, die ich schon einmal Herrn Oettinger gestellt habe, der sie nicht beantwortet hat. Dabei geht es um die IT-Industrie und die IT-Sicherheit. Ihre Aufgabe ist es bekanntlich, die IT-Industrie in Europa zu fördern, auf Vordermann zu bringen – völlig klar. Zugleich wurde im Bericht Moraes, wo es um die Untersuchung der massenhaften Überwachung europäischer Bürgerinnen und Bürger durch die NSA geht, seitens des Parlaments eine Reihe von Vorschlägen gemacht und eingefordert, die die Kommission umsetzen will. Dazu möchte ich gern Ihre Antwort haben.

Die erste Frage ist: Werden Sie Vorschläge unterbreiten, um Hintertüren in Software zu verbieten, damit mehr freie Software verwendet werden kann?

Zweite Frage: Werden Sie intensiv die IT-Industrie fördern, und zwar inklusive Computersicherheit und Kryptografie?

Drittens: Werden Sie eine europäische Strategie für größere Unabhängigkeit der europäischen Industrie im IT-Sektor fordern, und wie wollen Sie das umsetzen?

1-031

Andrus Ansip, Commissioner-designate. > Coding volumes are doubling every two years. I would like to say that in the European Union we do not have to start from scratch in promoting open source software. I know from this period when I acted a Prime Minister of Estonia that, at least in the country that I know best, we had a practice: if this software created in the country is getting some EU funds, then this software has to be open also for other users. If we would like to have really tailor-made solutions, then I think in the majority of cases we will use open-source software. In this meaning, the European Union, the European Commission are promoting usage of open-source software already, and of course I am planning to support those developments.

1-032

Julia Reda (Verts/ALE). – Yes, me again. I was very happy to hear in your opening statement that you are willing to write net neutrality into law. Now of course, the important question is how you define net neutrality. The European Parliament took a historic step in the Connected Continent Package when they defined net neutrality and proposed legal provisions to protect it. Do you agree with Parliament's definition of net neutrality, and will you push for it to be adopted quickly?

And further, this issue of net neutrality is, of course, closely connected to other issues such as data protection and copyright enforcement. What is your opinion on a comprehensive approach to net neutrality, encompassing telecoms, data protection and copyright reform? What concrete actions will you take to ensure the coherence of existing and future legislation with the principle of net neutrality?

1-033

Andrus Ansip, Commissioner-designate. > Net neutrality is a really important issue, and I think all the Members of the European Parliament are proud that, for the first time in the history of the European Union, the principle of net neutrality will be also regulated on the level of law. I am talking about the Telecoms Single Market Package. All the traffic in the Internet has to be treated equally. Nobody has the right to abuse a dominant position in the markets or gatekeeper's position.

As we know, in some search engines we can talk about net neutrality, especially for SMEs. Quite often it is absolutely impossible to gain visibility in those search engines, and if you are not able to gain visibility, you are not able to sell also. It means there is no sense to produce. Net neutrality is an important principle for our citizens and for our businesses. The speed issue: higher speed for higher price is acceptable, but not at the expense of others. Not at the expense of those whose speed is already low. No way.

1-034

Diane James (EFDD). – E-commerce and e-access across all sectors are probably the fastest growing areas in many EU countries – I am thinking of health and retail, and we discussed that when you came along to a meeting with my group. Yet high-speed Internet access is completely unequal. Some of the points that make that a problem are the conflicting areas of competitive

tendering, of trying to deal with monopolies and trying to deal with, for instance, the vested interests of state-owned telecom companies, of which there are many across the EU.

Can you give us some idea of how you are going to deal with the conflicts between these entrenched areas within the EU, and of what you set out as a vision?

1-035

Andrus Ansip, Commissioner-designate. > You mentioned also e-health. When we were talking about speed on the Internet, then there have to be exceptions of some kind also. Health is one of those exceptions. If the question is about human lives, then this information – e-health information, personal health data – this has to have priority when those data are moving on the Internet.

We have many e-healthcare digital systems in the European Union and you mentioned the vested interests of telecoms. I would like to talk about the vested interests of hospitals.

We are quite proud here in this Parliament about free movement of patients but how seriously we can talk about free movement of patients when in some countries patients do not even have the right to have a copy of their personal health records. How can those people use digital instruments to ask, for example, for a second opinion? We have to tackle those vested interests and I do not want to deal only with one sector – the telecom sector. Vested interests are everywhere.

1-036

Harald Vilimsky (NI). – Herr designierter Kommissar! Ich habe zwei Fragen.

Die Entwicklung des digitalen Marktes in der Europäischen Union – wir haben viele Beteuerungen gehört. Eine wirkliche Schlüsselrolle könnte die Steuerbefreiung für digitale Kommunikationstechnologien darstellen, zumindest aber für den Zugang zum Internet. Frage: Wie können Sie sich dieses Instrument vorstellen, um eine wirkliche Revolution auf dem europäischen digitalen Markt zu implementieren?

Die zweite Frage betrifft die Datensicherheit. Wir haben ja mehrfach illegale Angriffe auf Daten der Europäischen Union, ihre Einrichtungen und ihre Bürger erlebt. Meine Frage an Sie: Wie sehen Ihre geplanten Reaktionsmuster darauf aus, sollte wiederholt illegal Zugriff auf Daten der Europäischen Union und ihrer Bürger genommen werden?

1-037

Andrus Ansip, Commissioner-designate. > On the digital single market and tax exemptions for digital products, IT products, I am so sorry to say that I am not a real supporter of tax deductions and tax exemptions. This is not a big deal, because I think we will make those decisions on the level of the European Commission on the basis of consensus, and I am ready for consensus also. I come from a country where we did not – and we still do not – have so many tax deductions and tax exemptions. I am not a supporter of tax exemptions because, if the taxation system is transparent and simple, people can understand how it works and they are ready to pay their taxes, they are ready to say that I am an honest taxpayer, I am paying all my taxes according to law and I would like to know where the Parliament is wasting my money; that is very natural, it is how it has to work.

We can use our multiannual financial framework monitor to support development of new IT solutions. We can attract and create a business-friendly environment through private investment, and we can find other tools to develop the digital industry in the European Union.

1-038

Antonio López-Istúriz White (PPE). – Estimado vicepresidente propuesto, la publicación del coste de la «no Europa» en el mercado único digital indica que un mercado interior más consolidado y más completo en el ámbito digital podría, a largo plazo, elevar en un 4 % el producto interior bruto de la Unión Europea —hablamos de unos 520 billones de euros—.

Sin embargo, la situación actual en el ámbito digital es todavía de fragmentación de un mercado único completo: esencialmente, tenemos 28 mercados nacionales.

Me refiero a usted. Hablaba usted antes de Katainen; y yo mismo me considero liberal, pero estamos en el partido correcto, que es el Partido Popular Europeo. Usted está asociado al ALDE (Grupo de la Alianza de los Demócratas y Liberales por Europa), que es, a veces, un poquito más socialista que incluso el propio Partido Socialista Europeo.

Por eso yo le pregunto a usted, como liberal, ¿va a apoyar realmente, va a ayudar a la iniciativa privada en este ámbito del mercado único digital? Y, como liberal también, ¿qué medidas va a adoptar para romper esas barreras que impiden este mercado único digital?

1-039

Andrus Ansip, Commissioner-designate. > Of course we had to attract private investments, because public money is always limited and we cannot use public money everywhere.

You mentioned also Jyrki Katainen. Together we have to find EUR 300 billion to support growth and jobs. According to my understanding, it is also important to invest this money in a very efficient way. If we know that the digital sector – the digital economy – is growing much faster than traditional sectors, then it is the right thing to invest in digital.

Why do we have to look right now for additional funding? I think MFF was a compromise – let us say even a quite good compromise – but I think it was a shame that we could not protect funds mentioned to build up broadband network in the Connecting Europe Facility.

In the very beginning there were EUR 9 billion mentioned for broadband and digital solutions, but all the Member States – all my former colleagues – were in favour of a connected Europe. But when we started to divide the money, then almost everybody wanted to get more into their national envelopes. So now we have to look for other sources, to find additional resources to leverage this money. But private investments: this is a basis.

1-040

Liisa Jaakonsaari (S&D). – Arvoisa puheenjohtaja, puhun suomea, kuulumme samaan kieliperheeseen. Ette vastannut Evelyne Gebhardtin kysymykseen siitä, että millä tavalla todella turvataan maaseudulle, köyhille alueille nopeat laajakaistat. Minun mielestäni juuri nämä digitaaliset investoinnit infrastruktuuriin ovat ydinkysymys, ja sen pohjalta yritykset voivat toimia ja ohjelman tuottajat tekevät ohjelmia. Eli, äskeisestä puheenvuorosta vedin sen johtopäätöksen, että olette valmis tähän 300 miljardin uuteen herra Junckerin lupaamaan investointiohjelmaan sisällyttämään nämä laajakaistat, Itämeren merikaapelin ja monet muut digitaalisen vallankumouksen välttämättömät investoinnit. Toivottavasti olen oikeassa.

Toinen asia, johon suhtauduitte vähän kevyesti, on tämä verotus. En minäkään kannata verovähennyksiä, mutta herra komissaariehdokas, ehdottomasti Euroopan tasolla pitää harmonisoida esimerkiksi arvonlisäverojärjestelmää. Koska muuten tämä digitaalinen kauppa ei koskaan tule toimimaan kunnolla ja toisaalta sitten... (*Puheenjohtaja keskeytti puhujan.*)

1-041

Andrus Ansip, *komission varapuheenjohtaja- ja jäsen ehdokas*. > Kiitos kysymyksestä. Kyllä minä ymmärrän vähän suomea, mutta en puhu niin hyvin suomea.

1-042

Of course, we have to give people the opportunity to have really good access to high-speed Internet, including in rural areas and areas where the population density is low. As we all know, the most expensive mile is the last mile. Businesses are investing in big cities where the population density is high and it is profitable, but access to the Internet is a human right – a fundamental right nowadays – at least in Europe. We have to provide opportunities to use Internet-based e-services, including for people living in the countryside.

The question about taxation is a much bigger issue than I could describe in the 20 seconds I have. However, I am not a supporter of the harmonisation of rates of value-added tax. I would prefer, for example, to implement common consolidated corporate tax bases which will also be really helpful to companies, especially small and medium-sized companies. Maybe we can touch on this issue in further questions.

1-043

Louis Ide (ECR). – Mijnheer Ansip, ik heb een specifieke bezorgdheid. Digitalisering heeft inderdaad een heel groot potentieel maar zij kan ook een risico inhouden, meer bepaald rond de gegevensbescherming en de privacy, zoals u terecht heeft aangehaald. Als arts weet ik dat het aanleggen van een eigen medisch dossier on line en zorgprofielen in opmars is. Allerhande toepassingen kunnen worden ingezet voor eHealth, bijvoorbeeld op smartphone, apps of My Medical Records. Los van het feit dat de vraag zich stelt wat deze bedrijven doen met deze gegevens, is het allesbehalve denkbeeldig dat binnenkort niet alleen naaktfoto's van beroemdheden in de iCloud circuleren, maar dat ook medische gegevens circuleren. Welke concrete maatregelen stelt u voor tegen het misbruik van deze gegevens die digitaal worden opgeslagen en die gericht zouden kunnen worden doorgespeeld bijvoorbeeld aan verzekeringsmaatschappijen of die, minder gericht, door *hacking* bijvoorbeeld zouden kunnen circuleren op de publieke fora?

1-044

Andrus Ansip, *Commissioner-designate*. > As I have said today many times already, trust is a basic principle when we are talking about digital solutions, and when we are talking about health especially – a very delicate issue – then trust is a must.

So we have to protect data in a very secure manner. Data protection is not something for regulatory agencies. Our companies or our governments just have to deal with data protection because those agencies, data protection agencies, are asking for that.

No, data protection is about trust, it is about our citizens, it is about our businesses, it is about our e-services. If people cannot trust those e-services they will never use them. If people can trust

those services, they will use them. Let us remember this very sad Schumacher case. Personal health records were stolen but those data were on paper, not digital.

I would like to say that in many cases it is so; that to steal some kind of information, to misuse some kind of information you can get on paper is much easier than to steal data, to misuse data which are really securely protected.

1-045

Kaja Kallas (ALDE). – Hea Andrus, kasutan võimalust küsida eesti keeles. Sa rääkisid oma avasõnavõttus sellest, et paberivaba valitsemine on võimalik. Kui kiiresti sinu hinnangul oleks võimalik Euroopa Komisjon üle viia paberivabale valitsemisele ja kas see võiks olla eeskujuks ka näiteks Euroopa Parlamendile, kus iga päev toodetakse tonnide viisi dokumente, ja kui suur võiks olla selline kulude kokkuhoid printimata dokumentidest? Aitäh.

1-046

Andrus Ansip, Asepresidendi- ja volinikukandidaat. > Suur aitäh. Et rõhutada keelelist mitmekesisust, siis ma vastan eestikeelsele küsimusele eesti keeles.

Jälle kord pean ma ütleva, et me ei pea alustama nullist, kui me räägime Euroopa Komisjoni asjaajamise viimisest paberivabadele alustele, sest Euroopa Komisjon – ja täpselt samuti ka Euroopa Parlament – paljuski oma asjaajamises on juba paberivabad, kuid on mõned sellised võimalused, mis lubavad paberi kasutamist veelgi vähendada nii Euroopa Parlamendis kui ka Euroopa Komisjonis. Näiteks needsamad elektroonilised arved, mis on toonud väga suurt kokkuhoidu ja mugavust tarbijatele Taanis, Hispaanias, Itaalias, Soomes.

Me peame hakkama e-arveid aktsepteerima ka Euroopa Komisjonis. Ma usun, et see päev saabub ka siin, Euroopa Parlamendis. Kord ITRE-komisjoni koosolekul ma juba küsisin, et miks on see nii, et kui me võime osta lennukipileteid elektrooniliselt ja me võime ka kasutada neid elektrooniliselt, siis miks me peame nad välja printima, kui me esitame need Euroopa Parlamendi administratsioonile.

Ma olen veendunud selles, et eeskuju abil juhtimine omab väga olulist rolli. Ma olen veendunud selles, et mõlemad – nii Euroopa Komisjon kui ka Euroopa Parlament – peavad olema oma e-asjaajamises eeskujuks teistele Euroopa Liidu institutsioonidele. Aitäh.

1-047

Barbara Spinelli (GUE/NGL). – Sull'Agenda digitale europea, di cui sarò responsabile con i Commissari Oettinger, Jourová e Timmermans, cosa si può fare per dare vita in questo campo a una Carta dei diritti Internet, a un *Marco Civil* come quello adottato in Brasile quest'anno? Non basta infatti creare un mercato, non basta aver dimostrato di essere stato un ministro liberale in economia. Le norme servono e servono moltissimo in rete le norme che rispettino la non discriminazione, la neutralità della rete e i diritti individuali sanciti dalla Carta dei diritti. Le chiedo appunto se si vuole impegnare per una Carta dei diritti Internet, come è stato fatto in Brasile.

1-048

Andrus Ansip, Commissioner-designate. > Yes, I think there is a need to have a charter of Internet rights in Europe too. Many of those principles you mentioned are written in other legislation, in directives, in regulations. We have those main principles. You, and I think all of us, also have to put these into this charter of internet rights.

We touched already today on the net neutrality issue. I am also proud that it will be the first time in the history of the European Union that net neutrality will be regulated on the level of a directive in our legislation. This is really important for all of us. As we know, access to the Internet is one of those fundamental rights and we have to describe those rights in a very detailed way and in a concentrated way to our people. So my answer is yes.

1-049

Indrek Tarand (Verts/ALE). – Thank you, Mr Ansip, for your smooth deliberations. I have a minor problem with your written answer. Let me quote: ‘As a citizen and as a politician, I have always been a supporter of the European project, which is based on democratic values.’ Do you indeed describe those 10 glorious years as a manager of a Communist Party of the Soviet Union as promoting democratic values?

If not, there is a grave inaccuracy in your answer. What kind of trust do you expect to create among the Members of this Parliament if you introduce yourself with a small bluff? Perhaps you would consider begging pardon for those aspects, and then, at least, I could support your otherwise good intentions. Politically and personally, however, I regret your sickness and I wish you a good recovery.

1-050

Andrus Ansip, Commissioner-designate. > My past is transparent. All the people in Estonia know that I was a member of the Communist Party. But our people know also that I acted as mayor of the second-largest town in Estonia during the six years, and I was re-elected to this post. Our people in Estonia know also that I was elected even four times to our Parliament. Knowing all the details from my past, our people made those last EP elections quite successful to my party and to me personally. We both, our party and me, we collected the biggest number of votes during those EP elections in Estonia. My past is transparent: nothing to hide.

1-051

Tiziana Beghin (EFDD). – Signor Commissario designato, il mercato unico digitale rappresenta un moltiplicatore di crescita per le piccole e medie imprese europee e un'immensa spinta allo sviluppo per i cittadini. Le PMI ad alto tasso tecnologico e connesse generano due volte più posti di lavoro e due volte più profitto, mentre i cittadini che usano la rete sono più informati e consapevoli dei loro diritti.

Ma mentre noi parliamo di banda larga ultraveloce, molte famiglie e imprese, come già ricordato da qualche mio collega, soprattutto nel mondo rurale, non hanno ancora una connessione a Internet. Il potenziale della diffusione di connessioni veloci consiste anche nell'avvicinare sempre di più i cittadini ai centri di decisione, per arrivare un giorno a quella democrazia diretta in cui, da esponente del Movimento 5 Stelle, io credo fermamente.

L'accesso alla banda larga dovrebbe quindi essere un diritto di tutti gli europei. Cosa intende fare per garantire questo diritto, che è alla base dello sviluppo di un mercato unico digitale? Non crede che la crescita e lo sviluppo del mercato unico digitale possano beneficiare dell'uso più esteso di *software open source*? Intende promuovere l'utilizzo di questo *software* presso i cittadini e le pubbliche amministrazioni?

1-052

Andrus Ansip, Commissioner-designate. > We touched open-source software issue earlier already, and the answer, of course, is the same. Yes, the European Commission has to support

the usage of open-source software. It will create jobs in the European Union. It will be more flexible than to use licensed software and, according to my understanding, if we are not talking about mass products, it is also more cost-effective than licensed products. But this is a question of how to find a balance between licensed products and open-source software.

About shipping costs – yes, sometimes those shipping costs are at a terribly high level, when we are talking about selling abroad. In London, for example, when we are talking about e-commerce, you can get goods within minutes. But in some countries, when we are talking about specific goods and about the country I know best, you have to wait even for two weeks, and those partial delivery costs are proportionately high. So I do not think we have to accept that kind of situation in the European Union.

Then the question about rural areas. Once again, we touched this issue already. We have to support, to build up, this last mile to create a really good broadband network also in rural areas.

1-053

Carlos Coelho (PPE). – Mr Ansip, during the last two years of the Commission – the last two terms – there has been little progress regarding the European emergency number 112. Firstly, implementation of the Universal Service Directive is problematic. Secondly, the caller location requirements from Member States face significant obstacles related to time and accuracy, and information provided to citizens is not enough. Only 27% of European citizens are aware of the European emergency number 112. If we want to promote the safety and well-being of European citizens, there is much room for progress and a need to address the issue.

Taking into consideration your role as Vice-President-elect for the digital single market, could you confirm that emergency services and the European emergency number 112 will be a priority in the framework of the European Union digital single market, and what do you think the Commission should do?

1-054

Andrus Ansip, Commissioner-designate. > Yes, I think the eCall system is a top priority, because it will help to save lives. I will do my utmost to make it a reality. But once again, the question is about trust – or mainly about untrust. Some people – and, of course, some institutions – are not sure today that those eCall data will not be used for tracking, for example. So we have to protect everybody's privacy, we have to protect all those very sensitive data. And then I am sure, if people are sure their data are protected – also Members of the European Parliament and the European Commission once again, and all the Member States – they will vote in favour of eCall.

1-055

Nicola Danti (S&D). – Signor candidato Vicepresidente, vi sono tre proposte fondamentali sulle quali il Parlamento ha già espresso una posizione chiara. Mi riferisco al pacchetto legislativo "Continente connesso", alla proposta sull'accessibilità dei siti della pubblica amministrazione e alla direttiva sulla sicurezza delle reti. Tre proposte che possono contribuire in modo decisivo a ridurre la distanza tra le amministrazioni, i cittadini e le imprese e le tecnologie digitali, creando posti di lavoro, favorendo la ripresa economica e creando nuove opportunità. Su questo è necessario raggiungere accordi ambiziosi con il Consiglio.

Quali proposte concrete intende presentare e con quale spirito intende agire per favorire l'entrata in vigore, il prima possibile, di tali provvedimenti? Con riferimento specifico alla direttiva sulla

sicurezza delle reti, non ritiene che una necessaria cooperazione a livello comunitario debba andare di pari passo con una maggiore cooperazione internazionale, anche in vista di un'auspicata riforma della governance globale del web?

1-056

Andrus Ansip, Commissioner-designate. > On the first part of your question, we have finalised negotiations about the Connected Continent, about the Telecoms Single Market package and, as we have underlined many, many times already today, the TSM is really important to the meaning of the creation of a digital single market. All the elements of the TSM are important for European citizens, especially when we are talking about protecting consumer rights and the net neutrality principle. I am sorry, I lost the second half of your question. Can you repeat it?

1-057

Nicola Danti (S&D). – Quale azione intende mettere in campo per fare una maggiore cooperazione tra l'Europa e il resto della rete mondiale, anche in vista di una nuova riforma della *governance* globale del web?

1-058

Andrus Ansip, Commissioner-designate. > The second half I did not catch was this international part of the question. I know that negotiations about Safe Harbour were really complicated and difficult. The European Parliament made 13 proposals. From those 13 proposals (the majority of proposals dealing with business issues), they got positive response. But we have to tackle this National Security Exception. We have to be absolutely sure that the National Security Exception will be used as an exception, not on a regular basis or scaling for all the data. I think Americans have to deliver; Americans have to provide real trust to European citizens. But, suspension as an option has to stay on our table.

1-059

Vicky Ford (ECR). – You promised one of my colleagues that you will have your hearing in public online, but actually, we need to evaluate you on what you say in the room this evening. But because I believe in digital engagement with the public, I have asked people during this meeting for questions via Twitter. We have had questions on roaming, on copyright, on cyber-security, on the need to future-proof our legislation. But the one that I am going to ask from the ones that have come through the Twitter this evening is from business organisations on the data protection legislation, and how are we going to get the right balance between consumers and businesses across the single market, especially regarding concerns that are still coming in from small businesses on how they can use consumer data to unlock e-commerce whilst also protecting consumers' interests?

1-060

Andrus Ansip, Commissioner-designate. > Thank you for this question you got from Twitter. Data protection, as I said already, is not mentioned as being private to those regulatory agencies. Data protection – real data protection – on a very secure level is supporting all businesses. It does not matter what size of businesses: small or big businesses. Data protection, protection of everybody's privacy: generally speaking, trust is a basis of Internet-based e-solutions, digital services. Without data protection I do not think anybody is able to have a really successful business. We have to find the right balance between the interests of our citizens and between business interests.

But once again, I have to say we do not have to start from zero. This is an ongoing process, and I think we are moving quite rapidly with those issues. Of course, we would all like to see regulations prepared before there are technical possibilities to act, but unfortunately it is not so much possible. So I will do my utmost to find the right balance between protection of fundamental rights and business interests.

1-061

Morten Helveg Petersen (ALDE). – Europe needs to become more innovative and competitive, as well as more open and transparent. Interoperability and open standards are, in my view, absolutely crucial for Europe's development as a competitive and open online market place. Would you support addressing interoperability and use of open documents in a more systematic way, also by all of the European institutions? What role can open standards play, in your view? Do you think, for example, that the European Commission and Parliament should have proper open standards and infrastructures by themselves? And, perhaps more broadly, what will you do to support and promote European companies and the European approach towards data protection and privacy in this context?

1-062

Andrus Ansip, Commissioner-designate. > Interoperability is in many, many cases a real key word. We have many of those really good Internet-based e-solutions in different Member States, but, unfortunately, we cannot use those modern solutions in some other countries. Once again, I would like to talk about my own country. Every year, 20 000 Estonians working in a neighbouring country have to bring some documents from our Population Register to this neighbouring country; but sad to say, because of lack of interoperability, this is impossible.

It means that those people working in our neighbouring country – and you know this neighbouring country is a highly developed country in terms of ICT, Finland – every year those people, 20 000 people who are working in Finland, they have to take ferry tickets or airplane tickets to travel to Estonia. Sometimes it is possible also to organise those things at our embassy in Finland, but anyway, they are travelling to Estonia, waiting in queues, getting those paper documents with a signature and stamp, then back to the ferry, back to Finland and then, in Finland, those civil servants are very carefully typing this information into their computers. And then this information is digital once again. It is very difficult to understand in the 21st century how it has to be so, and I do not think it has to be so. We have to push on interoperability.

1-063

Cornelia Ernst (GUE/NGL). – Ich möchte noch einmal auf den Datenschutz zurückkommen. Auch Sie sind ja dann als Mitglied der Kommission zuständig für die Datenschutzreform und für Verträge, die in irgendeiner Art und Weise auch mit Datenschutz zu tun haben.

Sie wissen, dass das Parlament schon einen Beschluss zum Paket der Datenschutzreform gefasst hat, in dem enthalten ist, dass derjenige, der europäische Daten verarbeitet, sich auch an europäische Gesetze halten muss, und das auf einem hohen Niveau. Das steht im Widerspruch zu vielen Verträgen, die es gibt und die deshalb auch in der Diskussion sind.

Daraus ergeben sich zwei Fragen.

Erstens: Sind Sie der Auffassung, dass Verträge wie *Safe Harbor* – ganz konkret *Safe Harbor* –, die das Datenschutzniveau unterlaufen und keinerlei Schutz für personenbezogene Daten geben, gekündigt oder zumindest grundlegend verändert werden müssen?

Zweitens: Werden Sie sich für Regelungen zum Datenschutz beim sogenannten TTIP-Abkommen – beim EU-Freihandelsabkommen mit den USA – einsetzen?

1-064

Andrus Ansip, Commissioner-designate. > I have already touched on the safe harbour issue but, once again, the safe harbour principle is not safe today: everybody here in Europe can agree on that. We have to make safe harbour really safe – for our big business companies and for our citizens. They are interested in that. We have to make real changes in the existing safe harbour rules.

Parliament made 13 proposals and the majority of them got a positive response. Those proposals which got a positive response will help us to make the safe harbour safer – but not safe enough because our citizens are really worried about this ‘national security exception’. They do not know how the national security exception will be used. We are currently waiting for some genuine steps from the American side. If we do not get clear answers as to how the national security exception will be used, then of course suspension is an option that has to stay on the table.

1-065

Jan Philipp Albrecht (Verts/ALE). – Thank you very much for your strong words on data protection. I think you will have the huge majority of this House behind you when you go ahead with that, as the data protection package which we voted for sets high standards.

My first question is: how will you avoid the Council of Ministers’ taking a position that falls far short of Parliament’s stance, for we must somehow push for our position and have red lines on it? Secondly, I very much welcome your words on open source, but how will you ensure that products and services offered on the European market will not provide a backdoor to, for example, the US National Security Agency or others?

1-066

Andrus Ansip, Commissioner-designate. > Broad majority of the European Parliament is supporting data protection regulation, and according to my understanding, the good news is that more and more of the Member States are also supporting data protection framework. I promise to do my utmost to find a good solution for our citizens. I am quite sure that my former colleagues would like to see digital single market as a reality, but it is impossible without very secure data protection. Data protection is a pre-condition for a digital single market. Open-source software is like Wikipedia: as we know, everybody can use, everybody can develop. And if everyone can use and everybody can develop, then it is, according to my understanding, quite easy to find if there are some backdoors or not. With licensed software, I think it is more complicated to find those backdoors. Once again this is a question about trust. We have to create real trust here in Europe.

1-067

Marco Zullo (EFDD). – Salve Presidente, sono Zullo e sostituisco il mio collega. Signor Commissario, lei tratterà il mercato unico digitale. Noi vorremmo porre l'attenzione su un aspetto particolare di questo mercato, che è Internet. Internet non è solo un luogo dove si vendono e si comprano beni, servizi o intrattenimento. Dal nostro punto di vista Internet è come l'acqua, è come un bene comune, un bene di pubblica utilità. Internet è indispensabile quando un cittadino deve rapportarsi con le istituzioni pubbliche, è una via di accesso ai fatti di attualità, alla

conoscenza e alla cultura ed è un modo per rimanere vicini quando si è lontani. Quindi noi le chiediamo: si impegna a dichiarare che questi aspetti di Internet costituiscono un bene comune situato al di fuori delle leggi di mercato?

1-068

Andrus Ansip, Commissioner-designate. > The Internet has to stay open and inclusive. Of course, in the European Union, we have to protect our cultural diversity, and I think we are doing that quite successfully.

Your question was also about Internet governance. I am a supporter of the multi-stakeholder model of Internet governance. As we know, many countries around the world would like to change today's model into an inter-governmental model but I do not think that changing this multi-stakeholder model – in which all the parties are involved, including non-governmental organisations – into an intergovernmental model will be good for the Internet. However, we do have to make some changes in today's model. Today some countries have little involvement in Internet governance. Also, the role of the European Union needs to be bigger.

1-069

Ivan Štefanec (PPE) – Vážený pán kandidát na komisára, potešilo ma, že ste vo svojom úvodnom vystúpení spomenuli oblasť elektronického podpisu. Osobne považujem oblasť elektronického podpisu za kľúčovú pre úspešné, aktívnejšie využívanie elektronických služieb pre občanov. Preto sa Vás chcem opýtať, aké konkrétne kroky plánujete vykonať pre implementáciu elektronického podpisu a pre zjednodušenie príslušných procedúr.

1-070

Andrus Ansip, Commissioner-designate. > I will not even apologise for citing, once again, an example from the country I know best. We gave our citizens in Estonia a very highly protected digital identity and then, in 2007, we implemented the so-called 'only once' principle as the law in Estonia. Now everybody in Estonia is using digital signatures. Since 2002, the Estonian people have already given 175 million digital signatures. Our population is only 1.3 million. We figured out that the use of digital signatures had helped us to save one working week per year. That means 2% of our GDP – let us say, our defence expenditure – is covered just by the use of digital signatures.

Now, in the European Union, we already have the e-Signatures Directive. According to these rules, digital identities have to be mutually recognised as meeting certain standards. This is a really remarkable step forward towards bringing digital signatures into everyday use in all the EU Member States.

1-071

Virginie Rozière (S&D). – Madame la Présidente, Monsieur le Commissaire désigné, comme ce Parlement l'a plusieurs fois souligné, l'achèvement du marché unique numérique permettrait de stimuler la croissance et la création d'emplois. Mais celui-ci ne doit pas seulement ouvrir des perspectives pour les consommateurs et pour les entreprises, mais également pour les pouvoirs publics, tant au niveau européen qu'au niveau national et au niveau local. La modernisation des administrations publiques européennes et le développement de services publics en ligne performants sont essentiels pour répondre aux besoins concrets des citoyens et des entreprises.

Je vous ai entendu affirmer dans votre propos liminaire votre volonté d'encourager l'administration en ligne et je souhaiterais savoir quelles sont les mesures concrètes que vous

allez prendre pour vous assurer que la numérisation et la modernisation de l'administration publique soient effectivement réalisées pour le développement de l'administration en ligne. Par exemple, les points de contact uniques prévus par les directives "Services" et "Reconnaissance mutuelle des qualifications professionnelles" sont censés permettre une circulation facilitée des entreprises de services, tout en garantissant un niveau élevé de qualité pour ces mêmes services, en particulier concernant la protection des consommateurs.

Aujourd'hui, quelles mesures concrètes comptez-vous prendre pour parvenir à un niveau...

(La Présidente coupe le micro de l'oratrice)

1-072

Andrus Ansip, Commissioner-designate. > We have already touched on leading-by-example possibilities today. At first, of course, we had to give an example to our citizens, to Member States, on how to use the possibilities of e-governance. Those Internet-based e-solutions for public services have to be useful for our citizens. If people like them, they will definitely start to use them. Once again to Estonia: once we implemented E-Tax Board in Estonia, in the first year it was very popular with our people, because at the time we did not have this E-Tax Board in our country. People wanted to act as honest taxpayers and then to bring their declarations to the tax offices – they did not trust the postal services. They wanted to be absolutely sure that they were not making any mistakes in their declarations.

But now we have filled in tax declarations on the Internet: it is so comfortable. It takes the Prime Minister, who has only one source of income, 30 seconds to submit those data; for other people maybe three minutes – maybe even five minutes – and it is done. And you can be absolutely sure that you did not make any mistakes. Nobody will give you some ticket or put you in prison. Honest taxpayers are sure: it works. This year 96% of people who submitted their personal tax declarations said they used E-Tax Board. So these services have to be beneficial for our customers, our citizens.

1-073

Evžen Tošenovský (ECR). – Pane designovaný místopredseda, vážím si Vaší ambice dobudovat jednotný digitální trh.

V ložském roce jsme tady ještě v tom „starém“ parlamentu vedli dlouhou debatu o programu Connecting Europe Facility (CEF), který jste také zmínili již v předcházejících odpovědích. V průběhu došlo k dramatickému snížení, a tak se stalo, že v podstatě dva projekty nedostaly dostatečnou podporu. A to byly projekty podporující vysokou rychlost broadbandu, extrémně vysokou, tak abychom se přiblížili těm zemím, hlavně asijským, z hlediska jejich technické úrovně, a zadruhé to byly projekty, které měly podporovat rozšíření broadbandu do okolí mimo velké aglomerace, kde je ten problém, kde trh neumožňuje tak velkou podporu.

Jakou máte konkrétní představu do budoucna, aby tento program CEF neskončil jako formální program?

1-074

Andrus Ansip, Commissioner-designate. > Yes, unfortunately we do not have enough funding to cover the entire European Union with ultra-fast broadband under the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF). But, we have some other sources: we have the European Investment Bank; in Horizon 2020 there are quite substantial funds not only for broadband but for digital generally;

then, there are the European investment and structural funds. Here again, there is some funding earmarked for broadband.

However, if we wanted to cover all the territory of the European Union with 100-megabytes-per-second broadband, that would require at least EUR 200 billion, which is a huge amount of money.

To look at other countries: in the United States of America they are not using central government money at all to build the broadband network. They are using some municipal money, of course, but they are not using central government money. In some other countries – in Australia, in Japan, in South Korea – most of the funding used to build up the broadband network is public funding, coming directly from taxpayers.

Vice-President-designate Jyrki Katainen has to put together a huge investment package: EUR 300 billion. I hope we will get approximately EUR 35 billion from that package for digital purposes. This is not clear yet, but I am apportioning the money already. With leverage it is possible to increase this amount of money to EUR 130 billion.

My time is up, I am sorry.

1-075

Cora van Nieuwenhuizen (ALDE). – Listening to all your answers, it becomes clear that it really is an advantage that you are from one of the front-runner countries in the digital economy – Estonia (or perhaps we should now say: E-stonia). My question now: the population of Europe is ageing, and never before in history were there so many elderly people. That comes with a lot of new challenges: for example, for our healthcare systems. What possibilities do you see in that policy area? For example, are you a supporter of e-prescription systems that have been implemented in some Member States, and how would you make that kind of thing possible cross-border?

1-076

Andrus Ansip, Commissioner-designate. > Of course I am supporting this e-prescription solution.

In Sweden, when they implemented this e-prescription solution it was very popular from the very beginning. The same happened in Greece. Since they implemented the same type of e-prescription solution in Greece, 95% of all patients are using e-prescription.

In the country I know best, e-prescription was a quite complicated issue. We paid, that means the government paid, less than EUR 1 million – not EUR 1 billion but EUR 1 *million* – for this e-prescription solution. Of course we were faced with some technical problems during the implementation of e-prescription in Estonia, but today, all the people are really satisfied with e-prescription.

In cases of chronic diagnosis for example, you do not have to always visit your family doctor, you can make just a phone call and then using your ID card you can get those pharmaceuticals from any doctor. It really works. It makes the life of our people easier.

You mentioned also the ageing of the population. There is a huge area, the so-called ‘silver economy’ where digital can work wonders.

1-077

Eva Paunova (PPE). – As we heard and as we know, your country, Estonia, has been a success story in introducing e-government and e-voting. During parliamentary elections yesterday in my

country, Bulgaria, we witnessed a record low voter turnout. For that trend to change, we obviously need to change not only the content of politics but also the ways of ensuring participatory democracy.

As an MEP, one of my key priorities is the completion of the digital single market and I strongly believe that information and communication technologies can secure transparency and accountability as well as efficiency. Do you agree that electronic voting systems in Member States really do foster public participation in the political process? Should the Commission provide support and guidance for the establishment of such systems in Member States interested in introducing them? And what concrete action would you undertake to support the roll-out of e-government services?

1-078

Andrus Ansip, Commissioner-designate. > Voting systems and elections, those are purely national issues and I, as Vice-President-designate, do not want to say that they have to use e-elections in all the Member States.

It is up to the national governments to make those decisions but I myself do, of course, support e-elections.

The first time it happened in the country I know best – in the year 2005 – we provided possibilities all over the country to vote electronically during our municipal elections and only 10 000 people voted electronically at that time.

But as I have repeated many times already, it is a question of trust. If people can trust their money moving somewhere there in the Internet in normal banking, then they can trust their votes too. Voting on the Internet. Now it is so that during the last parliamentary EP elections we collected as much as one-third of all the votes via the e-voting system.

I am sure that we have to provide more than possibilities to take part in public life for those people too who are just living on the Internet. Those people, in the country I know best, are not just youngsters; elderly people in my country are very familiar with computers too and they are voting electronically.

1-079

Sergio Gutiérrez Prieto (S&D). – Usted ha presentado una estrategia para avanzar en el mercado único digital, y la verdad es que tiene una posición única como vicepresidente para poder coordinarse con el resto de compañeros del Colegio de Comisarios porque tendrá prácticamente que trabajar en clúster en una de las áreas concretas. Permítame formular tres preguntas concretas en este sentido.

En primer lugar, ¿no cree usted que detrás del dato de que solo el 14 % de las pymes comercian en Internet se esconden dos grandes problemas —primero, formación suficiente para gestionar el «e-comercio» por parte de las pequeñas y medianas empresas y, segundo, financiación suficiente para modernizar sus infraestructuras para poder acceder al mercado digital—? ¿Cree, en este sentido, posible usar los fondos regionales, el Fondo Social Europeo, para poder facilitar el acceso a las pymes?

Con las nuevas oportunidades, suelen producirse nuevos problemas, surgen nuevas realidades, y uno de los problemas para la igualdad de oportunidades es la brecha digital. ¿Cómo plantea

usted, desde su Departamento, reducir esa desigualdad entre generaciones, entre el medio rural y el medio urbano, para que la brecha digital no sea un factor más de desigualdad en la Unión Europea?

Y, en tercer lugar, para crear un verdadero mercado digital, es necesario que este sea competitivo y, para ello, es preciso que el acceso y los costes de Internet sean homologables en toda Europa. ¿Cómo va a afrontar con las grandes operadoras la reducción de costes en la Unión Europea para que sea un mercado homogéneo y competitivo?

1-080

Andrus Ansip, Commissioner-designate. > Yes, it is really the case that only 14% of small and medium sized enterprises are selling online. Mainly this percentage is so low because of the fragmented market. It is quite difficult to sell across borders having this fragmented market, so we have to deal with this issue.

Of course, there is a lack of IT-skilled people also. Once again, we have to take this very seriously in order to get more IT-skilled people. As I said in my opening speech, in 2020 there will be as many as 900 000 vacancies in the IT area; so we have to start from kindergartens. Coding has to be part of the curricula in our schools and, more widely, we have to pay more attention to creativity in our schools than we did during the last ten or twenty years. Because, nowadays there are no clear dividing lines between science and arts, for example.

We can use regional funds, social funds to create the digital sector and we are already using those funds. Lifelong learning is something that we have to take very seriously because nowadays people have to change their profession not once but many times during their lifetime.

1-081

Anna Maria Corazza Bildt (PPE). – Commissioner-designate, I really appreciate the commitment you have shown here to boosting the digital single market and removing fragmentation, but I would like us to get a sense of urgency. The Commission was working on a Single Market Act III – a comprehensive package to deal with restrictions, discrimination and hindrances, and to really give equal status to the trade, digitally and physically, of goods and services in Europe. Are you ready to present this in 2015?

My second question: I would like to take what my colleague Ró a Thun said on roaming. Parliament is ready. We have voted to reduce roaming costs for our citizens and, as you know, your former colleagues in Council are blocking this. Are you ready to use your position as Vice-President and former Prime Minister to take a tough position and finalise these negotiations in order to reduce roaming costs and to bring forward the telecoms single market package?

I have a third question. Are you ready to change the culture of the Commission in thinking digitally, in the sense of recognising that innovation is faster than politics, and maybe deregulation sometimes is better than over-regulation to boost the digital single market?

1-082

Andrus Ansip, Commissioner-designate. > So, roaming costs. I think all the people in Europe are waiting for those roaming surcharges to be abolished. It was good news for our people when roaming surcharges were reduced for phone calls. And I know that many of those telecom companies were also quite happy when it happened.

Before Parliament and the Commission put forward this proposal to cut roaming surcharges, most of those telecom companies were against it. They said it would hurt their businesses but what happened in real life? People just started to use their mobile phones when travelling abroad and spending holidays somewhere else, not in their home countries. And, of course, telecom companies lost in margins but they gained in volumes and let us say it was very beneficial; not for all the telecom companies – I do not want to say that – but for the majority of the telecom companies.

Now, talking about abolishing roaming surcharges too for information moving somewhere there on the Internet, once again they are saying it will kill their business model – some of them, not all of them – but in fact I hope people will start to use their mobile devices much more when travelling abroad. I too control all those expenditures. I do not visit all those websites here; I visit them at home.

Sorry, time is running too fast once again.

1-083

Patrizia Toia (S&D). – Signor Commissario designato, vorrei riportarla sul tema della *governance* di Internet che, accanto al tema della *net neutrality*, è ritenuto tema di grande importanza dal mio gruppo politico.

Noi pensiamo che l'Unione europea abbia un ruolo molto importante sia di salvaguardia che di contrappeso nella *governance* di Internet, soprattutto a fronte di attori non continentali che spesso vogliono limitare la scelta dei consumatori. Ecco, si impegna lei a garantire che l'Unione europea abbia un ruolo più determinante nei negoziati in seno all'ICANN in questa direzione, cioè a fare del ruolo dell'Unione europea un forte propulsore per una *governance* di Internet che rispetti i valori di democrazia e di libertà e che garantisca anche gli interessi europei?

La seconda brevissima domanda riguarda lo spettro radio (per il quale la strategia europea ha cominciato a fare passi avanti), l'inventario e un'ipotesi di un uso più efficiente. Ma per armonizzare lo spettro e avere un uso più efficiente bisogna toccare il tema delle autorizzazioni, che gli Stati membri custodiscono gelosamente come loro competenza. Invece noi crediamo che debba essere un tema da affrontare a livello europeo. Che cosa pensa lei in proposito?

1-084

Andrus Ansip, Commissioner-designate > With regard to spectrum allocation, of course maximum harmonisation is needed. But Member States know that spectrum is a natural resource and in some Member States they would just like to get the maximum amount of money from selling those frequencies.

Let us talk about the 4G Long-term Evolution (LTE) standard. In some countries, almost 99% of the territory is already covered with 4G LTE. I am talking once again here about Scandinavia and the Baltic countries. In some other countries, 4G LTE coverage is still zero: they have not even started yet with spectrum allocation auctions.

Why is this so? It will definitely increase the digital divide between different Member States. Once again, I think we have to talk about vested interests. In some countries, incumbent telecom companies are so powerful that they have little interest in switching investments from which they can benefit for a few more years into new technologies. But today we are already looking at 5G. As we know, the standards are changing almost every 10 years. So, in relation to spectrum,

maximum harmonisation at EU level is needed. Personally, however, I believe more in voluntary cooperation than in the use of power.

1-085

Gunnar Hökmark (PPE). – We all know our own countries best, but thanks to the Internet we know the world better than at any time before. Very soon it will be just as important to know the world as our own countries, because what happens there will happen here. The world is full of people who have watched the development of the Internet and we have all been surprised – companies, citizens and politicians – because what was impossible three years ago is real today. The crucial factor is of course not to define what the services are to be, but to secure that we can have the best possible services developing here. I would like to ask you, partly following up that question, what are you going to do in order to secure that we in Europe have the best capacities and the highest speeds, and spectrum that allows for this development? Do you think that the present targets are enough or would you like to go further?

1-086

Andrus Ansip, Commissioner-designate. > I think the targets set in the digital agenda for Europe are quite ambitious already. To cover all the European Union, or 50% of the Union, in the year 2020 with 100 megabytes per second is quite an ambitious target.

But, of course, we have to do more. We have to be ready to use this 700 megahertz for digital, but now – and this is really a follow-up question – we know that those 700 megahertz needed for broadband, for digital, are in very different usage in different Member States. In some countries they are using those frequencies for military purposes. For some neighbouring countries, big neighbours, they are creating problems because in those big countries outside of the European Union, they are using 700 megahertz for military purposes. Then broadcasting; in many EU Member States 700 megahertz is used for broadcasting. So once again we have to find consensus on how to use this 700 megahertz in the most efficient way for European citizens. And, of course, in those cases when, for example, broadcasters have to leave 700 megahertz to other purposes, then they have to get compensation.

It is a question for Member States, but in any case we cannot use power. More harmonisation is needed, and ambitious goals are very welcome.

1-087

Miapetra Kumpula-Natri (S&D). – A functional digital market is one of the most prominent possibilities for economic growth. There is a political will and I am happy to see that you have it but it also needs technological questions. It took almost three hours to talk about 5G and I want to talk about the future.

As broadband is getting broader it must have been good to get a letter, even nicer to get a picture, SMS, e-mail, but now videos, and it goes on. I am worried that the EU and Europe was a forerunner in adopting 3G but in 4G we are lagging behind. Do you see a role that the EU could have in 5G? Do you consider it part of your work to promote an infrastructure that could be a basis for European innovations and opportunities for our businesses and for Europeans to have a leading role, and that also creates jobs here, in Europe?

1-088

Andrus Ansip, Commissioner-designate. > I know that all the Finns and Estonians and others are proud that 1G was established as long ago as 1981. 2G was a real success story for the

European Union but, once again, Finns and people from Sweden had a leading role in this. 4G was something we need to repeat with 5G. Europe had, at that time, a real leading position in the world. If it was possible at that time, why not in the year 2020, when we will most likely start to use 5G?

We do not currently have any intergovernmental multinational agreements about 5G, but our scientists, engineers and, I think, politicians are working on 5G already. I hope – and I expect – that 5G will deal more with efficiency issues: how to use spectrum in a much more efficient way; how to use energy in a much more efficient way. I am not talking just about batteries here: energy consumption in the mobile and telecom sector is increasing. These are issues which we have to deal with right now, today.

1-089

Anne Sander (PPE). – Madame la Présidente, Monsieur le Commissaire désigné, les géants du Net échappent largement à l'impôt en Europe en raison de montages financiers complexes et de failles juridiques dans la législation européenne.

Je sais que la Commission précédente s'était saisie de la question en mettant notamment en place un groupe d'experts sur la fiscalité du numérique, et je voudrais recueillir votre avis sur ce point en vous posant trois questions.

Pensez-vous qu'il est normal qu'il y ait ce décalage entre les immenses bénéfices de ces entreprises étrangères et leur faible contribution à l'impôt?

Quelles mesures souhaitez-vous prendre pour éviter le dumping social auquel se livrent les États membres de l'Union européenne entre eux au profit de ces entreprises?

Enfin, êtes-vous favorable à l'imposition des services numériques dans l'État membre où ils sont fournis?

1-090

Andrus Ansip, Commissioner-designate. > Yes, taxation is a really sensitive issue today. Some of those global companies are using very aggressive taxation policies. Those policies are not at all illegal, but they are somehow cherry-picking from among different Member States and, as is generally the case, the EU will lose revenues.

I do not think we should underestimate the role of public opinion. We have to make public how some companies are dealing with taxes. I am absolutely sure that taxpayers will also give their response, and this response will be negative for those who are using those aggressive tax policies. Tax evasion is once again a huge problem and we have to deal with those issues. I would like to do my utmost, together with Commissioner Moscovici, to avoid tax evasion. I am also a supporter of a common consolidated corporate tax base. I think that this additional option will create more possibilities, especially for small and medium-sized companies, to act as honest taxpayers.

1-091

Jörg Leichtfried (S&D). – I would like to come back to the data protection issue (maybe the last time in this hearing). But I have two questions: a more general one and a very specialised one. The general one is: this Digital Agenda is such a wild field, with so many things to consider. How do you think it is possible, and how will you organise the legal framework so that data

protection and privacy are always regarded as a top issue throughout this agenda framework? Concerning my second question, I listened very carefully: you said that there must be or should be a balance between commercial interests and data protection. I do not see that balance; for me, data protection is the essential part of the whole issue. Do you really think there always has to be a balance? And do you have, for yourself, in data protection issues, also red lines, where you say: the balance is finished; data protection counts and nothing else. Do you have these red lines, and what red lines might that be?

1-092

Andrus Ansip, Commissioner-designate. > For me data protection is an absolute value. This is the basis for all the digital solutions. If data is not well protected, securely protected, no business or people will use those Internet public services. So, it is a must. Data protection has to stay as a top issue. I do not even think that it is possible – sorry to say, but I have to correct myself – it is possible to find some kind of balance between business interest and data protection, but to find a balance between research interest and data protection is a must.

We discussed earlier about e-Healthcare. To make research; to set some regulations which will allow us to use text mining and data mining is also really necessary because, as we know, in some countries – in the United States of America, for example – it is possible to use text mining and then data mining. Or in Japan, for example, according to legislation this is possible in Japan. But, because of copyright, in the European Union it is almost impossible, so we have to find solutions which will allow our research institutions and universities to deal with text mining and data mining.

1-093

Michał Boni (PPE). – Commissioner-designate, a horizontal approach is key for the digital strategy. Finding synergy among some aspects of the digital single market is basic. These are data protection, big data development, open data accessibility and security of data, taken all together. We need equilibrium between citizens' rights to privacy protection and business possibilities when implementing this. We need trust between consumers and companies, and we do not need redundant burdens. We need a better climate for opening and sharing data, and reusing public information by citizens and business without any conditions or payment, and we need freedom and security in networks. Responding to cyber threats, we need common European tools for security. How do you want to ensure a strongly-coordinated policy for this new digital strategy, and how do you want to convince Member States to be more open for harmonisation of legislation in the key areas for the digital single market and to have some binding solutions, especially in the area of the protection, security and sharing of data?

1-094

Andrus Ansip, Commissioner-designate. > We have already discussed many times today about security and about data protection, and I do not want to repeat what I said earlier.

You mentioned open data, and I think all those data collected using public money have to be open for non-commercial use or even for commercial use. It is possible to find some correlations using open data, which will be really useful for our society.

The world is becoming a more and more data-driven world. Our industries are more and more data industries. Let us take the car industry. 40% from value added in car industries is created by digital. Now we can say that car industries are data industries already. Or let us take pharmaceutical companies – this is not chemistry any more, this is a data industry. Nowadays it

is possible to predict or to design some structures of the molecules carrying some concrete properties without chemistry – just using IT and data.

Data protection, once again, is the basis for all those really rapid developments in our industries and societies.

1-095

Silvia Costa (S&D). – Signor Ansip, come presidente della commissione per la cultura le chiedo se nell'implementazione del mercato unico digitale europeo si impegnerà per tutelare e promuovere la specificità dei contenuti culturali e sostenere la produzione e distribuzione dei prodotti audiovisivi sulla rete, anche come grande risorsa per valorizzare la diversità e la ricchezza culturale e per garantire altresì competitività e nuova occupazione.

Per noi questo implica innanzitutto la revisione urgente della direttiva europea sui media e i servizi audiovisivi perché non è tutelata. Questa direttiva non prevede l'estensione alla rete e la riforma del *copyright* europeo per garantire l'equilibrio necessario fra accesso alla cultura e riconoscimento dell'equa remunerazione degli autori. Le chiediamo su questo quali impegni lei intende assumere.

Infine, ho molto apprezzato la sua risposta sull'esigenza per la *governance* di Internet di regole fiscali, ma io credo che si ponga con urgenza anche il tema della regolamentazione degli *over the top* tra l'altro per evitare posizioni dominanti anche nell'uso dei contenuti culturali, in cui non si investe nei contenuti culturali europei, si utilizzano spesso imponendo *royalties* arbitrarie, e quindi si è di fatto tendenzialmente parassitari rispetto alla produzione culturale.

1-096

Andrus Ansip, Commissioner-designate. > Cultural diversity in the European Union is something we have to be proud of, and we have to protect it. The cultural sector generates approximately 4% of GDP in the European Union. This is a quite remarkable share, even simply in terms of money and our economy. But the basic value is, of course, culture itself.

Over-the-top services do not follow copyright regulations, for example. In some cases, they cannot do that because their structure does not actually allow them to use the relevant kinds of tool. There is, of course, imbalance between telecom companies and over-the-top services and I think we have to find the right model, whereby they can act fruitfully together. Today telecom companies are responsible for the broadband network, for example, whereas over-the-top services can simply use this network without having been responsible for the creation of it.

To come back to culture: we have to support our creative sector, we have to support our movie production industry, and we have to support our cinemas, because we have to protect cultural diversity in the European Union.

1-097

Sabine Verheyen (PPE). – *Commissioner-designate!* Sie sprechen sich für einen ganzheitlichen Ansatz aus, um die Potenziale des digitalen Binnenmarkts zu heben.

Wie bewerten Sie die Bedeutung und die Rolle des Kultur- und Kreativsektors und des gesamten *Content*-Bereichs, insbesondere unter Berücksichtigung des Doppelcharakters des Kultur- und Kreativsektors als wirtschaftliches und gleichzeitig gesellschaftliches Gut?

Wie werden Sie im Rahmen Ihrer Arbeit konkret sicherstellen, dass eine Balance zwischen diesen beiden Seiten – der gesellschaftlichen und wirtschaftlichen – gefunden wird?

Und wie werden Sie konkret mit den wachsenden Herausforderungen einer wachsenden Konvergenz des Mediensektors im digitalen Binnenmarkt und den unterschiedlichen Regulierungsrahmen umgehen? Wie stehen Sie in diesem Kontext zur geografisch fragmentierten Struktur des Kultur- und Medienbereichs und vor allem auch des Urheberrechts?

1-098

Andrus Ansip, Commissioner-designate. > Culture and digital are not enemies. They are allies. In the European Union we have many really good examples of where this cooperation between culture and digital is really fruitful. Let us take Europeana for example. This is a website you can access from all the EU Member States, and you can enjoy our rich cultural heritage. More than 30 million objects are right there on Europeana. Digital is providing real possibilities to promote European culture, through our digital libraries, for example, and digital museums. Digital helps to promote our culture and digital helps also to protect our cultural heritage.

As I said in my opening speech, I am against geo-blocking. We have to review our copyright legislation and we had to deal with this, especially with the territoriality principle as this is old-fashioned. But I will finish with football. As a taxpayer, I used to pay to watch football games in Estonia, but here in Belgium I do not have access to this content. Why? I do not even have access to our main television news programme because it was geo-blocked because of some clips that may be in this news programme. I do not think it is fair. I do not think we have to accept this kind of geo-blocking. It does not matter if we are talking about cultural activities or sports.

1-099

Chair. > I would like to thank the Commissioner-designate for all his answers, and to thank the Members from all four different committees for the many varied and diverse questions this evening. Commissioner-designate, you now have five minutes to make your closing statement.

1-100

Andrus Ansip, Commissioner-designate. > Honourable committee Chairs, Members of the European Parliament, thank you for all your questions. Over the last few weeks I have met all political groups and as many committee coordinators as I have been able to. These discussions helped me a great deal to focus on the real issues that I outlined at the start of this hearing.

The digital sector has a vital role to play in boosting growth, jobs and investment in Europe. Digital and IT are everywhere. They are advancing and developing every day, and Europe needs to keep up.

If confirmed as Vice-President, completing a digital single market for Europe will be my top priority as set out in the political guidelines issued by President-elect Juncker. Achieving this goal will not only help to enhance our economy and create more jobs, it will also improve the daily lives of our citizens and the competitiveness of European companies in the digital age.

This means stimulating Europe's digital environment to minimise legal uncertainty and create fair conditions for all. It means building trust and confidence in the online environment by strengthening cyber-security and the protection of private and commercial data. It means removing the many obstacles that are the reason for today's fragmented digital market.

I believe that a digital single market is what European consumers and business really want: high-speed connections for all, no barriers across borders, all backed up by modern and joined-up infrastructure.

To meet the expectations and demands of EU citizens, I intend to work as transparently as possible in consultation, partnership, and in a spirit of mutual trust with you. I will maintain a constant dialogue with all committees. Thank you.

(Applause)

1-101

Chair. > Commissioner-designate, I have to thank you again for such a long hearing, especially as you have not been 100% fit during the past few weeks. You have covered a huge range of different issues. Since I took over the chair of the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO) and the committee was given responsibility for the digital single market, it has been clear that colleagues – not just from this committee but across Parliament – see the digital world as a place that does not live in a separate room but as a place where our economy needs to grow and build and which affects every single thing that we do in the future. We are ready to try and embrace those many different challenges to really get the benefits from a secure and safe, but vibrant, digital world.

We look forward to your evaluation tomorrow. You do not need to do a public hearing before we do our evaluation, you will be glad to hear. The public hearing was here and if you want to do online communications that is great, but our evaluation will be based on this hearing and not on future online fora, so the three hours is now over.

For the three committees involved, there will be a meeting of coordinators at 11.00 tomorrow. I suspect the Internal Market Committee will have a discussion as part of our coordinators meeting before then. At 11.00 tomorrow we will decide democratically how we progress.

(Applause)

(The hearing closed at 21.30)