

BREXIT: comments on the Withdrawal Agreement

Brussels, 15 November 2018

Commenting on the publication of the Withdrawal Agreement establishing the terms of the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union and considering the outline of the Political Declaration setting out the framework for the future relationship between the European Union and the United Kingdom, Cecilia Bonefeld-Dahl, Director General, DIGITALEUROPE, said:

“The proposed agreement provides a basis on which to secure a comprehensive deal on the EU-UK future relationship during the implementation period. DIGITALEUROPE particularly welcomes the clear statement of intent to secure the free flow of personal data between the EU and the UK. This issue is critical to the tech sector and to every other industry in a modern digitising economy.

DIGITALEUROPE would like to praise the hard work and diplomatic skills displayed all along by the negotiating parties. This made the proposed Withdrawal Agreement possible. We believe that it is the only solution on the table likely to secure continuing deep, trusted and productive relations between the EU and the UK while delivering on the outcome of the 2016 referendum.

The proposed Withdrawal Agreement is the last hope to avoid the very dangerous consequences of no deal, which would directly impact the ability of tech companies to trade, move data and secure talent. For lack of a deal, supply chains would be disrupted all over the EU and we would be deprived of the UK's strong contribution to the EU's world leading role in science and research. It would make access to the UK market more complex and costly, thus harming EU business, particularly SMEs.

The proposed Withdrawal Agreement could generate friction in trade with the UK and impose significant and costly changes for businesses. We are therefore concerned that the transition period is not long enough to secure the kind of comprehensive relationship required and we welcome the ability within the Withdrawal Agreement to extend that period.

The digital tech industry sees the Withdrawal Agreement as a first step in securing the long-term outcome that businesses and investors need. We hope that the EU27, as well as the EU and UK Parliaments, will endorse this landmark Agreement.

DIGITALEUROPE stands ready to help design a comprehensive, workable long-term partnership between the EU and the UK. Indeed, significant additional work is needed to provide clarity in the future relationship, specifically on securing close alignment and comprehensive market access for digital and telecoms services. A simple Free Trade Agreement would not deliver the needs of the tech industry or the EU prosperity.”

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ABOUT DIGITALEUROPE

DIGITALEUROPE represents the digital technology industry in Europe. Our members include some of the world's largest IT, telecoms and consumer electronics companies and national associations from every part of Europe. DIGITALEUROPE wants European businesses and citizens to benefit fully from digital technologies and for Europe to grow, attract and sustain the world's best digital technology companies. DIGITALEUROPE ensures industry participation in the development and implementation of EU policies.

DIGITALEUROPE's members include in total over 35,000 ICT Companies in Europe represented by 63 Corporate Members and 39 National Trade Associations from across Europe. Our website provides further information on our recent news and activities: <http://www.digitaleurope.org>

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