European Commission: “Connected Continent”, an Initiative to Realise a Single European Telecoms Market

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On 11 September 2013, the "Connected Continent: Building a Telecoms Single Market" legislative package was launched by European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso in his 2013 State of the Union speech. The aim of this development is to create one genuine single market for electronic communications in Europe. This development comes after the 2013 Spring European Council call for measures to create a Single Telecoms Market. The Council concluded that there is no genuine single market in the European Union (EU) for electronic communications due to the fact that the Union is fragmented into distinct national markets. The Commission recognises that the Union is therefore losing out on an important source of potential growth.

The legislative package for the “Connected Continent” is part of the Digital Agenda for Europe (DAE), which is the first of seven flagship initiatives under Europe 2020. Europe 2020 is the strategy of the European Union for the coming decade, which aims to address the weaknesses of its current growth model and to realise a new, smart, sustainable and inclusive model. According to its website, the DAE “aims to reboot Europe's economy and help Europe's citizens and businesses to get the most out of digital technologies”.

The main objective of the “Connected Continent” is to realise the freedom to provide and to consume (digital) services for everyone, wherever one is in the EU. With due consideration of the global financial crisis, the European Commission intends to create new sustainable digital jobs and industries, to reinforce Europe’s competitiveness and to drive innovation. In order to attain those objectives, the Commission will focus on the following points:

1. “Simplification of regulation for companies;

2. More coordination of spectrum use, so that we see more wireless broadband, more 4G investment, and the emergence of pan-EU mobile companies with integrated networks;

3. Standardised fixed-access products, encourages more competition between more companies and facilitates increasing provision of pan-EU services;

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4. Protection of Open Internet, guarantees for net neutrality, innovation and consumer rights;

5. Pushing roaming premiums out of the market through a “carrot and stick” approach, in order to say goodbye to roaming premiums in 2016 or earlier;

6. Consumer protection: plain language contracts, with more comparable information, and greater rights to switch provider or contract.”

In order to achieve these goals, the legislative package pushes the telecoms sector completely into the internet age and removes barriers so that the 28 distinct national telecoms markets can become one single market. The legislative package takes into account the 2009 Telecoms Framework Directive and builds on all the work that has been done in the previous 25 years with regard to reform of the telecoms market.

Commission proposes major step forward telecoms single market

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-828_en.htm

Connected Continent: a single telecom market for growth & jobs

https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/connected-continent-single-telecom-market-growth-jobs

Legislative package Connected Continent

http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/connected-continent-legislative-package

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