Dear Commissioner,

Providing the right tools to keep Germany and Europe competitive and to enable them to take the leading role on their way towards a Gigabit Society is your and the whole Commission’s main task. We would like to explicitly thank you for your effort. However, we still see urgent need for action.

The long-term need for gigabit networks has to be the general guidance for national policy and regulation as well as for the work of the Commission. Applications requiring a comprehensive coverage such as connected cars and agriculture 4.0 but also education and health care demand a fast deployment of fixed and mobile networks. Especially 5G requires a far-reaching coverage of fibre infrastructures. In fact, this will be decisive for the competitiveness of Germany and Europe.

Over-emphasising the timeline up to 2018 and only 50 Mbps would lead to additional costs and crucial delays in the roll-out of gigabit networks. Short-term goals should not be questioned, but they have to be compatible with longer-term goals and included into an overall strategy.

Investors, businesses and our whole society need a forward-looking and transparent strategy that ensures equal living and working conditions in urban and rural areas, bridging the digital divide and securing jobs in those areas. Political goals that reach only up to 2018 are definitely not forward-looking enough for today’s economy and society. With the upcoming negotiations on the telecoms review, the current EU perspective of 2020 will be extended far beyond this decade.

Datum
11.07.2016

Germany and Europe need gigabit infrastructures up to the end-users in order to move towards a Gigabit Society
New strategy for sustainable broadband investments
The Digital Strategy 2025 (“Digitale Strategie 2025”) of the German Federal Minister of Economic Affairs and Energy, which has been much welcomed by businesses, does not only include a clear analysis of the needs up to 2025; it also provides the basis for intermediate goals that promote instead of prevent the roll-out of gigabit networks, which are crucial for digitalization until 2025. However, this Digital Strategy 2025 was not sufficiently accounted for in the results of the government coalition in Meseberg.

Statements referring to goals and concrete steps beyond 2018 continue to be vague. However, without a clear perspective it is almost impossible to take decisions on crucial measures such as the distribution of funds, which would support sustainable fibre goals or intermediate steps oriented at achieving them. National deployment strategies, state aid funding and regulation have to be designed in such a way that the swift roll-out of gigabit networks is not hindered.

The signatories of this letter support all measures of the Commission that help to achieve a true Digital Single Market. The decision you are about to take will be pivotal for European competitiveness. The single market also has to be defined through quality and a clear time horizon, so we can face the upcoming challenges together and use digitalization to strengthen our economic performance in Europe.

In order to promote the urgently needed swift and comprehensive deployment of gigabit networks, we, the undersigning associations count on your support.

Best regards

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