

VATM position on the European elections

Heading towards a European digital future

The EU continues to grow together, not least through the Digital Single Market, which is an important part of Europe's economic future. The digitalisation of Europe will therefore also play a decisive role in the coming legislative period of the European Parliament. The European elections in May 2019 are of great importance to define clear strategic goals and to create economic scope for fair competition, thereby safeguarding the legitimate interests and positions of German telecommunications companies.

The VATM has summarized the central positions of the industry for the future members of the European Parliament in the following six core messages:

1. Push ahead with liberalisation – enabling Gigabit faster through competition

The liberalisation process begun in the 1990s must be continued. Former monopolies must continue to be replaced by stronger competition. This also means that ex ante regulation must be maintained as long as competition law cannot effectively prevent market distortion and ex post control is not sufficient.

2. Prevent digital divide between urban and rural areas - use funding efficiently

A future-oriented digital infrastructure must be created so that the services and jobs of a digital economy can be created in rural areas, and jobs safeguarded. Here, honest concepts must be found that prevent the threat of misallocation of construction capacities, especially in rural areas. Sensible funding - including the use of vouchers - benefits users directly and strengthens the demand for gigabit networks.

3. Fair rules for an open market - the basis for innovative capacity

The digitalisation of Europe goes hand in hand with the use of digital services offered to citizens and businesses. Networks are the enablers of digitalisation and competition between the most innovative or secure services on the networks will become a key factor in international competition, particularly for the European economy. Open Access, fair access for market participants at fair prices, will therefore continue to be indispensable in the future.

4. Act in a pioneering way for the European economy - not size, but innovation counts

The "Internet of Things", "Big Data" and "Artificial Intelligence" are no longer visions of the future. In order for European companies to be able to compete on an international level, the EU must create a level playing field against companies that often do not come from Europe and are treated differently from a regulatory point of view. In addition, sufficient funds must be invested in research, education

and the promotion of a European strategy for the future that strategically deals with existing plans, such as those in China. The EU Commission's "AI Alliance" is a first step in the right direction.

5. Strengthen data security - few but clear rules

More important than ever for all citizens is the security of their data. With the GDPR, important safeguards have entered into force. Businesses now need reliable European legislation to secure their data. However, the ePrivacy proposal sets the wrong course and needs to be revised. Other legislative proposals, such as eEvidence and the ENISA Regulation, are also fundamentally important. But here, too, they must not be allowed to become a brake on innovation through complex regulations.

6. Targeted support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and business customer service providers - services will be the drivers of digitalisation

Smaller companies in particular often suffer from complex rules and regulations. In view of the challenges posed by digitalisation, VATM expects the new EU Parliament to reduce paralysing bureaucracy in the interest of companies in a timely manner and to provide greater support to SMEs in particular.

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