



Brussels, 21 September 2015

Statement on 'digital protectionism'

As Members of European Parliament we are surprised and concerned about the strong statements coming from US sources about regulatory and legislative proposals on the digital agenda for the EU. While many of these are still in very early stages, President Obama spoke of 'digital protectionism', and many in the private sector echo similar words.

We represent different political parties, and come from different EU Member States. We have different ideas on privacy and platforms, netneutrality and encryption, Bitcoin, zero-days or copyright. We will seek to improve and change any proposal from the European Commission, in the interest of our citizens and of all people.

We have heated political debates about what the best approach is to disruptive business models, fueled by technology driven by consumer demand. We are excited about opportunities while we believe safeguarding principles and values is key.

We know you have similar debates in the US. In fact we are personally lobbied by US and EU based firms and NGO's alike.

While we admire the dynamism and success of Silicon Valley, we trust in Europe's ability to foster talent, creativity and entrepreneurship. The acronym 'GAFA' is not one we ever use, and we do not see legislation as a way to manage the growth of companies.

Instead, by removing barriers and updating the regulatory framework we seek to make entrepreneurship and innovation easier, supporting both businesses and consumers. This is for the benefit of all those trading in Europe, including US tech firms, for whom the regulatory landscape should become more harmonized and thus more easy to navigate.

The political debates on the way forward are not a 'Transatlantic rift' and should not be made into one. Rather they represent different views and beliefs that run right through our societies. We consider close cooperation between the EU and the US as vital in a changing world.

Artificially deepening the Transatlantic divide on digital topics is not what we need. Instead, let's build trust and exchange ideas, but accept that a variety of views are an integral part of our open democracies.

Sincerely,

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