



**Presentation of the priorities of the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the EU  
in the area of digital economy and society**

**before the**

**Industry, Research and Energy Committee of the European Parliament  
Ivaylo Moskovski, Minister for Transport, Information and Technology and Communications  
Brussels, 23 January 2018**

MR CHAIR,

HONOURABLE MEMBERS,

It is my great honour to present you the priorities of the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union. We want to achieve consensus, competitiveness and cohesion in all sectors. We will work to deepen cooperation with the countries of the Western Balkans and further their integration with the values of the European Union. We will focus on four main areas during the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council: the future of Europe and young people; security and stability in a strong and united Europe; digital economy and digital skills; and the perspective of the Western Balkans and their connectivity.

One of the goals for all of us is to complete the digital single market by the end of this year. We will continue to prioritise work on the digital economy and digital skills. This is essential for the completion of the Digital Single Market Strategy initiatives. In active cooperation with our partners, we will ensure continuity as regards these files and our ambition is to deliver the best possible results.

Our desire is to accelerate the development of digital technologies through fifth-generation networks (5G), which will improve connectivity and multimodal access. Bulgaria has

taken over the Presidency during a period in which a lot of work is being done on the digital agenda, both with regard to the current dossiers and to the European Commission's new initiatives expected this spring.

Our main task this spring will be to continue and successfully complete the negotiation process on the **reform of the regulatory framework for electronic communications** during the Bulgarian Presidency. This will bring us another step closer to the Gigabit society. We are aware that this is a file of great importance for European industry as it will pave the way for competition to develop and set the incentives for investment in fifth-generation networks (5G) and fixed fibre optic networks with very high capacity.

**Cybersecurity**, which is an important element of today's digital economy and society, occupies a significant place on our political agenda. We will strive to reach a general approach to the proposed Cyber Security Act, which will give the European Network and Information Security Agency (ENISA) a strong standing mandate and will build a single cyber-environment through the creation of a European Cyber Certification Framework. This must ensure trust and security on the internet and address the current fragmentation of the market.

Bulgaria is ready to cooperate with the European Parliament on the file on the **free movement of non-personal data** – an important component for building a data-based economy. The free flow of non-personal data is a prerequisite for a functioning digital economy that generates new jobs and requires new skills. In order to unleash the potential of the digital economy, we must ensure that data can circulate freely within the Union. We are therefore ready to start negotiations as soon as the European Parliament has adopted its amendments.

We are aware that in the electronic environment, our citizens need **privacy** and the ability to communicate confidentially. We will seek compromise solutions to strike a balance between an appropriate level of protection and sufficient incentives for innovation.

During the Bulgarian Presidency, the discussions on the so-called "third data package" will start. The benefits of opening up **public sector data** are indisputable and, in connection with the Commission's forthcoming legislative initiative to revise the Public Sector Information Directive, we will organise a ministerial discussion during the June Council on the added value of opening up publicly funded data. This package will also present a non-legislative initiative in the field of **artificial intelligence** and **robotics**, on which we are seeking to prepare Council conclusions, and we will begin reviewing the **Top Level Domain ".eu"**. These initiatives will address the opportunities and challenges posed by the internet, autonomous systems, high performance research, and the need to establish Europe as a world leader in these areas.

In the first half of this year, legislative initiatives aimed at building a safe and innovation-friendly ecosystem around **online platforms** in the EU – regulating platform-to-business relations and **tackling harmful content online** – will be announced. These are horizontal, socially relevant topics that concern different countries and we intend to initiate intensive discussions on them in the competent preparatory bodies of the Council.

The Bulgarian Presidency will launch the discussions on the **multiannual financial framework after 2020**, where we expect to have a special subsection for digital technology. More financial resources are needed for digital infrastructures, digital skills, digital transformation of services and cybersecurity.

We will seek to promote the EU's **digital policies among the Western Balkan countries**, in particular guaranteed broadband coverage for all, by encouraging ultra-high speed cross-border connectivity and focussing on the introduction of EU rules to gradually reduce roaming charges for these countries. In this regard, we have taken a number of initiatives on a bilateral basis.

The motto of our presidency is "United we stand strong" and I am convinced that together with the Member States and in close cooperation with you, we can achieve a great deal for a united digital Europe. We will be proactive in the field of industry, infrastructure connectivity and innovation and we will rely on your support.



Thank you for your attention!