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**Date: 06/05/2015**

**Reference: BEUC-PR-2015-006**

## **EU unveils Digital Single Market: Consumers must be central**

The EU's [Digital Single Market](#) (DSM) Strategy, a [top priority](#) of the Juncker Commission, has been published today.

The multi-faceted DSM plan includes Europe's policy directions for the next 4 years on key consumer issues such as copyright reform; 'geo-blocking'; consumer rights when buying products or digital content (e.g. music, video, eBooks) online; telecoms and cross-border parcel delivery prices.

Monique Goyens, The European Consumer Organisation Director General, commented:

"We welcome this ambitious Strategy. It aims to boost consumer trust online while ensuring better access to goods, services and digital content from across the EU. Its success will depend upon enhancing market competition and setting high consumer protection standards. When implementing these plans, consumers' needs must be front and centre."

### **'Geo-blocking' and territorial discrimination must go**

"A modern European online marketplace would enable consumers to compare prices and buy products from all 28 countries. But too often, business practices such as rerouting to national websites or non-delivery to certain countries stand in the way, both are major sources of frustration. This is why we need to pursue a ban on discrimination against those wanting to purchase from other countries.

"Geo-blocking' is a crystal clear contradiction of the very notion of a single market. In 2015, land borders should not be replicated online for viewing content that is available in other European countries."

### **Copyright reform included, but short-sighted?**

"Regrettably, the longstanding problem of copyright levies has been omitted from the Commission's Strategy. Europe's copyright levying systems do not correspond with modern online distribution and use of content. Consumers should not be charged for everyday private uses such as backing up content or moving it to another device. Europe must directly address the problem and finally drag the status quo into the 21<sup>st</sup> century by phasing-out copyright levies.

"That less than 4% of 'Video On Demand' services are accessible across EU national borders shows the scale of the task, while businesses cite copyright as a significant reason for not offering content in other countries.

*(1/2 Contd.)*

“Harmonisation of copyright laws to allow for modern uses is a matter of urgency. It would be a lost opportunity not to do so.”

## **Telecoms**

“There can be no Digital Single Market without a Telecoms Single Market. Overhauling the legal framework in which it operates was taken on by the previous Commission and this work should be swiftly finalised. Further steps are needed to establish Net Neutrality in Europe, eradicate roaming fees and drive competition among network providers.”

## **Ensure rights for online purchases**

“Today’s Strategy aims to harmonise specific online consumer rights across the EU, something BEUC welcomes. We are reassured to see the idea of introducing the trader’s ‘home law option’ - which would deprive consumers of better protections applicable in their home country - has been dropped in favour of more harmonisation. Online businesses represented by Ecommerce Europe and BEUC wrote to the European Commission to flag that this is the better solution and outline how clearer rules could best be achieved.

“Cross-border parcel delivery charges for products are all too often exorbitant and two thirds of consumers cite it as a main obstacle. Speedy work to lower these costs is clearly required if European e-Commerce is to thrive.”

See BEUC/E-Commerce Europe [joint letter](#)

See BEUC/Digital Europe [joint letter](#)

Further [BEUC materials](#) on the Digital Single Market

**Note to Editors:** All figures sourced from the European Commission’s DSM [Communication](#).

**ENDS**