

**PARTICIPATION OF MR ANTHONY WHELAN IN THE  
LATIN AMERICA-EU SYMPOSIUM ON ICT REGULATION**

**BRUSSELS, NOVEMBER 15, 2010**

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**SPEAKING POINTS FOR THE CONCLUSION  
OF THE SYMPOSIUM**

Buenas tardes, bienvenidos a Bruselas.

"Boa tard, benvindus e Brushelas" (phonetic).

I am glad to be here today at this important EU-Latin American symposium in the field of ICT regulation. I understand that the exchanges that took place here today on a number of key and challenging topics have been very productive.

I also know that my colleague Mario has gone this morning through our multiple fields of cooperation.

Before concluding this event, I would like to share with you the main elements of our Digital Agenda for Europe, which was adopted last May. But let me already tell you that being here with you today, it is my feeling that we

should change the title and call it “a Digital Agenda with Europe”. As it is clear that in the ICT field Europe cannot work alone. I am convinced that it is crucial that our two regions, and the rest of the world, work together to address the technological challenges of the future.

### The Digital Agenda for Europe

The DAE is our action plan and one cannot talk about the Digital Agenda without mentioning its “raison d’être”: the Digital Agenda for Europe is about generating growth. Indeed, the ICT sector alone is directly responsible for 5 % of European GDP (660 billion annually), but it contributes far more to overall productivity growth. This is why the DAE is absolutely essential for Europe’s long term economic recovery

But I don’t want you to think the Digital Agenda is only about productivity. It is about people: it is about growth and jobs and about improving the quality of life.

How are we going to obtain this economic and social benefits: by maximising the incredible potential of ICT. For this, the logic behind the DAE is to stimulate a virtuous circle of activity: attractive content and services

need to be made available in an interoperable and borderless internet. This will stimulate demand for higher speeds and capacity. Demand will then increase incentives for investment in infrastructures and innovation.

This is why it is absolutely essential to work on various fields at the same time. We have indeed identified seven priorities to make the virtuous circle work:

- 1) A vibrant Digital Single Market, where digital goods and services can be commercialised on equal terms in all Member States; In many fields Europe is still a patchwork of 27 national legislations, making e-commerce and the provision of cross border services difficult in a world, the internet, that has not frontiers.
- 2) More interoperability and better standards, with a focus on open and international standards, for a more efficient public procurement and coordination between public authorities;
- 3) Greater trust and security, addressing all evolving threats, from cybercrime attacks to identity theft and online frauds; No trust, no use.
- 4) Fast and ultrafast internet access: basic broadband for all by 2013, increasing to availability at 30 Mbps or more for 100% of EU citizens by 2020 and with 50% of households having subscriptions above 100

Mbps by that date. In a few minutes I will come back to this point;

- 5) Greater investment in research and innovation, leveraging more private investment and enhancing cooperation with EU Member States to double annual total public spending on ICT research to 11 billion euros by 2020;
- 6) Enhanced digital literacy, skills and inclusion, to make everyone part of the information society and aware of the potential of ICT for all kind of jobs; One third of the European population has not yet used the Internet.
- 7) ICTs that spread wider social benefits, addressing key challenges, such as climate change and an ageing population.

### Cooperation with Latin America

So you will ask me, what's in for me in your digital Agenda?

As I said at the beginning of my presentation, Europe cannot afford to work on its own. I would say that there are 3 main reasons for this:

1) **Ideas and knowledge can only flourish in an open environment: this is why Europe's research programmes call for cooperation at a worldwide level.** I mentioned that one of our priorities in the Digital Agenda is R&D and I can tell you that our cooperation on this is essential. And I am very proud to tell you that the participation of Latin American organisations in ICT and e-Infrastructures projects has increased significantly from 29 in FP5 (1992-2002) to 80 in FP6 (2002-2006) and over 100 so far in FP 7 (since 2007).

2) International cooperation is not only essential to ensure exploitation of research results on a global scale, **but also to build interoperable technology solutions.** This is indeed another priority of four DAE. Open international standards are crucial for industry to be able to achieve interoperability and economies of scale, by reducing fragmentation of markets, both within and with third countries.

3) **Societal challenges are global:** I cannot think of any of the main societal challenges that we have identified in

our DAE, which is not shared with you: climate change, cybersecurity threats, digital literacy, etc

**This is why cooperation is essential, in particular in the regulatory field.** The exchanges of best practices with Latin American regulators can only be a win-win situation. And I sincerely hope that we can increase this cooperation. And to show you how I am serious about it, let me share with you the first deliverable of our DA Action plan: our Broadband Package

### Framework for Broadband Investment

As I said, some of the most ambitious goals of our Digital Agenda concern broadband coverage.

Although Europe has the highest average levels of broadband penetration worldwide (24.8%), it has far from the best networks and take up varies considerably. Only 1-2% of Europeans have a fast fibre-based internet, compared to 12% in Japan and 15% in South Korea. EU consumers also pay higher prices for those high-speed connections compared to Japanese or Koreans.

The roll-out of ultra-fast networks will be key in the development of the digital economy, allowing new bandwidth-hungry services to take off and creating incentives for the further development of business, of e-Health, of e-Learning and for media content in the future. The demand for online services is not only increasing in the private, but also in the public sector.

Another aspect, we are facing more and more, is a shift from the PC era to an era where mobile devices with always-on internet connectivity are becoming widespread. Where more and more users buy digital downloads of music, videos and applications often straight on their mobile devices. Access to all kind of services around the clock is possible, but even more than that, the development of mobile technologies now gives us the possibility to have access everywhere. This is why in order to further boost the growth of innovative wireless broadband services, we need a better coordination of the radio spectrum management.

Meeting the targets set by Europe 2020 strategy and the Digital Agenda, including the 100% broadband coverage

objective can only be done by a mix of technologies – fixed and wireless.

To this end, the Commission adopted last September a three-part broadband package (the Broadband Communication, the NGA Recommendation and Spectrum Policy Programme), which will provide a common framework for the deployment of ultra fast broadband internet in the European Union and meet the Europe 2020 and the Digital Agenda targets.

The Broadband Communication outlines how we will be working with Member States to introduce operational broadband plans at the national level. A key element of the broadband policy is to lower investment and operational costs and create further incentives. National, regional and local policy makers play a critical role and can greatly cut costs by, for example:

- making sure that co-ordinated civil engineering works systematically involve potential investors;
- streamlining and clearing rights of way and reducing administrative burden;
- mapping available passive infrastructure suitable for cabling and upgrading in-building wiring;

- and opening up already constructed public core networks and/or finance the roll-out of new passive infrastructure.

The Recommendation on regulated access to Next Generation Access Networks, lays down a clear regulatory framework, encouraging investment in the high-speed networks of the future *while preserving effective competition*.

Why? Because although telecom operators need to invest a lot to deploy next generation fibre networks, we cannot take the risk that this fundamental transition may lead to a re-monopolisation of telecom networks.

We need both incumbents and new market entrants to deliver competitive broadband services. All investing companies have our strong support in this transition

Finally, the proposal for a Radio Spectrum Policy Programme sets out a framework for an efficient spectrum management promoting, in particular, the development of wireless broadband.

These documents make up the Community level contribution to ensuring Europe has a world class internet infrastructure to compete in the world economy and to further improve the lives of its citizens.

Many Latin American countries also have ambitious plans for broadband development or are adopting strategies to boost broadband coverage and take-up.

I hope that we will take the chance to cooperate in terms of sharing best practices, benchmarking common solutions, etc;

The Regional Action Plan on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean (eLAC2010) has been a key element to promote the use of ICT as tools for the economic development and social inclusion in the region.

The European Commission is proud to have supported Latin America in this process and to contribute to the promotion of the exchange of experiences and intra and interregional cooperation with its @LIS2 Cooperation Programme, which also supports the dialogue between European and Latin American regulators (Regulatel), .

### Conclusion

I am sure that our future collaboration in this field will allow us to progress together towards our common targets for the digital society and to address jointly global challenges.

There are a lot of opportunities for growth between our two regions and many new jobs can be created in these high potential sectors, if we work in synergy.

Thank you for your attention.