



(Brussels, 25 May 2016)

Stimulus for e-commerce positive

- but doubts on geo-blocking initiative

BUSINESSEUROPE fully supports the European Commission in its efforts to increase cross-border e-commerce and further develop the digital economy. The package presented today is timely because while e-commerce is continuously increasing at national level, cross-border online sales are still underdeveloped, also as a result of remaining fragmentation in the single market.

BUSINESSEUROPE's Director General Markus J. Beyrer commented:

“Cross-border e-commerce in Europe is still underdeveloped with only 20% of internet users buying online from other EU Member States. Complex rules, remaining fragmentation and a lack of confidence are rightly addressed by the package presented today. Still, we are concerned about the lack of clarity on certain elements of the geo-blocking proposal where loopholes may exist.”

European Union: Individuals ordering goods or services online



Source: European Commission Digital Scoreboard

While it is reasonable to allow traders to use their home country rules for cross-border sales, this is not a game-changer as companies will in practice still face plenty of difficulties when selling across the single market. In addition, there is uncertainty regarding after-sale services, for instance in case of returns. Consumers and traders need certainty to be confident to buy and sell online.



PRESS RELEASE

This package will ensure better cooperation between national consumer authorities, which is important for effective enforcement in the single market. However, the use of additional powers - such as the one to take down websites - should be proportionate and subject to minimum procedural guarantees.

“Platforms are at the core of digital transformation. We support the Commission’s balanced line in today’s package to address fragmentation and ensure that existing rules are up-to-date and fit for purpose. Europe’s approach to platforms needs to be flexible and future-proof”, said Beyrer.

Background: Today the Commission presented its “*Digital Single Market e-Commerce and Content package*”. It contains a number of legislative proposals and announces actions to support the development of the digital economy and boost cross-border e-commerce. BUSINESSEUROPE’s key messages on geo-blocking are [here](#).

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