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The EU really can cut red tape

Midday statement on Commission cut the number of regulated telecoms markets in Europe  
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My goal for EU telecoms is to ensure EU consumers enjoy the highest levels of competition: without unnecessary red tape for the sector. Today we can make that happen.

Since 2007, we have regulated 7 telecoms markets, in areas where we cannot rely on competition law alone.

But this is a fast-moving market. New trends mean new kinds of competition. Cable and fibre networks; alternative operators; "over the top" services like voice over IP or online messaging.

So today I can announce that we can cut the number of regulated relevant markets. We are removing two markets from regulation all together – namely, retail fixed-line telephony, and wholesale fixed call origination. Plus we will redraw the boundaries, to further cut the burden, and focus on the distinct needs of business users.

This is cutting red tape, without harming competition. And that will boost European growth, jobs and opportunity.

Europe is crying out for connectivity. Every citizen in love with their smartphone. Every business that wants high quality, tailor made communications: videoconferencing, cloud computing, secure connections, you name it!

My vision is for a telecom sector that can supply that growing digital demand. A sector diverse and dynamic, innovative and investing. Where Europeans enjoy competition and choice. Where operators can think European to compete globally.

So I do not want to stop at 4 markets. Maybe one day we can get that number down to zero.

We are not there yet. But we need to make it easier for operators to plan, invest and work across borders. Change the market, to a genuine telecoms single market. And along the way, review the rules – a review which, as the Commission has made clear, must also look at the level playing field with "over-the-top" services, and the trend of audio-visual convergence. The incoming members of the new Commission have also indicated that this issue will be addressed.

To start with we have to establish a connected continent. That is why I am pushing the European Parliament and Council of Ministers to complete that legislation as an absolute
priority – end roaming, safeguard net neutrality, stronger spectrum coordination, and removing the barriers that obstruct a competitive, digital Europe.