Speaking points by Vice-President Ansip following College orientation debate on Digital Single Market

Brussels, 25 March 2015

Some years ago, we opened Europe’s borders. People are no longer separated by a fence or wall. But in the online world, these borders still exist. When people move around Europe, they would like to listen to music or watch films they have bought online. But they cannot. People are locked into the place where they bought it.

A 100 million Europeans would like to access content cross-border. People are happy to pay to get their films or music legally. But when they try, they are told they come from the 'wrong' country. They are locked out.

Locking in and locking out is not a winning strategy. People want to shop online in other countries. But only 7 percent of small and medium-size businesses in the EU sell across borders. If the rules were the same, or simpler, in all EU countries, more than half of companies would sell across the EU.

The internet seems borderless. But today the "Internet of Things" runs into national borders. Spectrum, standards and systems – it all needs to join up. But it does not.

We do not yet have a Digital Single Market in Europe. Consumers and companies in Europe are digitally "grounded". They cannot choose or move freely. In the 21st century, this is absurd.

So, today in the College of Commissioners, we agreed that action is needed in three areas:

**Firstly**, to fix the single market in the online world. This means making sure that people can access and use online services and digital goods across borders. Making sure businesses face fewer barriers when they sell to other EU countries.

**Secondly**, to set the right rules and conditions for those in the market, both traditional and newcomers.

**Thirdly**, to tackle issues of data, skills and common standards, for European industry and citizens to make the most of the digital economy.

In six weeks, on May 6th, I will come back here to you and propose specific solutions. I am under no illusions. This will be an uphill struggle. We need to be ambitious. Otherwise, Europe will wait many more years to enjoy these basic digital freedoms.

Thank you - and I’m ready to take your questions.