Dear all,

Please find below a flash report on the meeting between Cmssr SCHMIT and Bolt’s CEO, which took place on 26 April.

Best,

FLASH REPORT – Meeting between Cmssr SCHMIT and Markus VILLIG, CEO and Founder of BOLT – 26/04/2021

Participants:
European Commission
- Nicholas SCHMIT, European Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights
- Antoine KASEL, Head of Cabinet of Commissioner SCHMIT
- Santina BERTULESSI, Deputy Head of Cabinet of Commissioner SCHMIT
- Ana Carla PEREIRA, Employment and Social Adviser to Commissioner SCHMIT
- Fabien DELL, Member of Cabinet of Commissioner SCHMIT
- Anouk FABER, Political Adviser to Commissioner SCHMIT

Bolt
- Markus VILLIG, Founder and CEO
- Dominick MOXON-TRITSCH, Vice President for Regulation and Public Policy

Main takeaways:
- Markus VILLIG presented BOLT’s business and values, namely of building a more sustainable world through its ride-hailing and food-delivery services. It has 400K contractors in 19 MS, making it the 2nd biggest platform in Europe after Uber.
- Cmssr SCHMIT said that the platform economy responds to a clear demand for such services, while stressing that there is also a demand for a regulatory framework for it to develop in a fair and sustainable manner, conjugating job flexibility and social protection.
Cmssr SCHMIT pointed to the extensive number (100+) of EU court cases concerning platform work, signaling the need for legal clarity ensuring fairness and a level-playing field, by which platforms who comply with the rules are not disadvantaged.

Cmssr SCHMIT said that the aim of the EU initiative is not to create barriers to the development of the platform economy, but rather to enable all its actors to reap its opportunities while being shielded from its challenges.

Cmssr SCHMIT explained that COM is in the process of formally consulting social partners, while also stressing the importance of engaging in dialogue with platform companies. He then asked Markus VILLIG what is Bolt’s view on the way forward.

Markus VILLIG said that the platform economy is experiencing huge growth and that in many markets demand for Bolt’s services now outstrips supply. This pushes up drivers’ earning, which are sometimes double or triple the market’s minimum wage.

Cmssr SCHMIT asked Bolt how they view platforms that offer an employee status and whether they could do the same. He also asked their views on liability for algorithmic management users. He stressed the EU initiative seeks to ensure a level playing-field while improving working conditions.

Dominick MOXON-TRITSCH said that platforms like DeliveryHero and TakeAway use the employee status but that this has not solved many problems experienced by platform workers, also because the employee status encourages the black economy and ‘under-the-counter’ arrangements.

Dominick MOXON-TRITSCH also said that ‘robo-firing’ in the EU is already illegal, by means of the P2B regulation requiring a ‘human-in-the-loop’ of account deactivation processes. On the employment status, he added that hiring all drivers would mean giving jobs to 50/66% fewer people than now.