



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
Secretariat-General

Assistant to the Secretary-General

Brussels,  
SG/■

**MEETING BETWEEN THE SECRETARY-GENERAL AND REPRESENTATIVES OF VODAFONE GROUP PLC.**

**20 DECEMBER 2018, 12.00 – 12.30**

*This is not an exact or complete verbatim but rather an overview of the topics that were covered during the discussion. It has not been validated nor approved by the participants present at the discussion.*

**Participants:** Mr Roland Koch, member of the Supervisory Board of Vodafone Deutschland; Mr Joakim Reiter, Vodafone External Affairs Director.

**Commission:** Mr Martin Selmayr (Secretary-General); Ms Cristiane Canenbley (Member of Cabinet of President Juncker); ■ (Assistant to the Secretary-General); ■ (Assistant to the Director-General, DG CNECT).

On 20 December 2018, the Secretary-General met with representatives of Vodafone Group to discuss the new agenda for digital.

In the meeting, the Vodafone representatives discussed the current situation in the telecommunication market which is characterized by low profit margins and increasing investments for the next-generation infrastructure such as 5G. In the context of the new European Electronic Communications Code, more thoughts need to be spent on how to enable the industry to generate healthy returns of investments, which could finance these infrastructure investments. More generally, there was a discussion on the regulatory landscape in the EU for telecommunication providers.

Finalising the Capital Markets Union is one important means to equip telecom operators with the necessary capital to undertake these investments. The European Commission is pushing hard to still make progress in this mandate.

A further point of discussion was the observation that, soon, all objects will be connected. To avoid ending up thinking and working again in national telecommunication markets instead of focusing on one big European market in this new domain, a passporting regime could be a suggested way forward. The emergence of a completely new market for machine-to-machine communication could indeed be an opening to discuss the idea of a passporting regime, and the Vodafone representatives were encouraged to elaborate this idea and submit it to the relevant services.

While there was agreement that strong European companies in all sectors including telecommunication are needed, it was concluded that the way forward is not to pick and choose individual winners. This has not worked in the past, and there is no indication that it would work in the future.

The Vodafone representatives also inquired about the status of Brexit, in particular concerning data flows. The Commission representatives made clear that, in case of a no deal, no special contingency measures for data flows would be taken.