

**Commissioner Phil Hogan**

**Video Message for DigitalEurope Event “Masters of Digital 2020 - A Digitally Transformed European Society”**

**4<sup>th</sup> February 2020**

Ladies and gentlemen,

I want to wish you the best of luck for the “Masters of Digital 2020” event. You have put together a very impressive programme, befitting Europe's largest digital policy conference. Please be assured that the European Commission will study your discussions very closely.

Unfortunately, due to urgent work commitments I am unable to attend on this occasion, so I am sending this message to provide some reflections for your debate.

The new Commission under President Ursula von der Leyen has made the transition to a truly digital Europe one of its top priorities. We recognise that policy needs to catch up with reality: the digital transformation of our societies is happening at a staggering pace and we want to harness it for the benefit of our citizens and our businesses.

We believe Europe is in a strong position to become a digital leader in many areas, developing key future technologies while ensuring our approach is grounded in truly European values.

Of course, trade and the digital policy space are very closely linked.

The **global e-commerce market** was worth **\$29 trillion in 2017** and continues to grow at a fast pace, with around **1.3 billion people already shopping online**. The EU is the world's largest exporter of services and is therefore in a strong position to benefit from the opportunities of digital trade.

**Modern trade is to a very high extent enabled by digital technologies.** For example, banks rely heavily on the international transfer of data, agricultural commodity traders use e-signatures to conclude international purchases and European manufacturers can track the performance of their machines across the planet thanks to electronic data transfers.

And the digital revolution is driving the growth of a dynamic new business environment built around data and software based services.

We must support our European companies to make the most of the opportunities in the data space.

In our bilateral agreements, we are proposing an **ambitious Digital Trade title**.

And at global level, we are **working in cooperation with other WTO members** to shape global rules on digital trade.

We are **very actively involved in WTO negotiations on e-commerce**. We need a successful outcome of the talks, because **digital competitiveness is becoming vital** for the sustainability of our economic development.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are fully committed to making the most of the digital transformation, and we are grateful to organisations like DigitalEurope for their constructive role in this mission.

Let me conclude by once again wishing you all the best for the “Masters of Digital 2020” event, and I look forward to hearing the conclusions of your discussion. Thank you.