



Phone Call Commissioner – Bitkom [REDACTED], 7 May 2020

Virtual attendance: Bitkom's [REDACTED]

Commissioner Hogan, C. Rueda Catry and A. Drzewoska (CAB), [REDACTED]
(DG TRADE)

Bitkom [REDACTED] explained they saw COVID-19 as a turning point and were interested in the efforts of the EU and EUMS to address the challenges faced. Bitkom specified they did not believe in Europe's self-sufficiency as an option but Europe had to reduce some of its dependencies. Bitkom wanted to discuss 4 issues: digital trade; data flows; economic recovery and relations with China.

The Commissioner explained digital trade and data flows are a central issue. He highlighted the EU's ambitious bilateral digital trade agenda (negotiations ongoing with NZ, AUS and the UK) and the importance of EU text proposals on data flows, the prohibition of mandatory source code disclosure, online consumer protection and trust, spam, electronic contracts and e-authentication/signatures. The Commissioner also explained what is included in the EU proposal tabled in the WTO e-commerce negotiations and noted EU concern about the increasing protectionist trend of data localisation measures in third countries and the EU commitment to an ambitious outcome in the WTO e-commerce negotiations. The Commissioner cited the recently adopted EU Communication on the EU Data Strategy.

Bitkom expressed their support and noted that in the area of digital and data sovereignty the EU should not act in isolation, especially when developing new technologies, but should try not catch up with other parts of the world and focus our efforts on key technologies where the EU can be the best, such as quantum computing/medicines etc.

Bitkom noted that the EU new multiannual financial framework (MFF) should look at digital and long-term policy solutions. Bitkom also noted they had recently presented to the German government a proposal for a digital recovery plan for Germany and are looking into the need to promote employees' digital skills and digitize the administration.

In response, the Commissioner outlined the Commission's two stated overarching issues for the MFF: the Green Deal and the Digital Economy.

Bitkom had no concrete point on EU-China relations.

The Commissioner debriefed on the last CAI negotiating rounds.

Bitkom called on the EU post-Covid-19 response to focus on the future of Europe and not on an emergency solution.

The Commissioner closed the discussion by noting that now was the time to ensure that the EU is more sustainable and efficient through digitization. He invited Bitkom to remain engaged with DG TRADE.