

Informal Meeting of Competitiveness Ministers

"Digital economy"

26 - 27 March 2015, Riga

A two day informal meeting of Competitiveness Ministers (COMPET) will take place on 26 – 27 March in Riga and will address some of the main [priorities of the Latvian Presidency](#). It will bring together the ministers from the European Economic Area in charge of internal market issues and industry, and representatives from the European Commission, General Secretariat of the Council and the European Parliament. The meeting will be chaired by the Minister for Economics of Latvia Dana Reizniece-Ozola. In order to help to achieve fruitful debate, leaders from the local and European Union level business communities have been invited as keynote speakers.

As the EU must seize digital opportunities in order to deliver smart sustainable and inclusive growth the main theme for the informal meeting will be the EU digital economy. Discussions will be organised in three sessions, covering the role of EU single market in the digital economy, the digitalisation of industry and digital entrepreneurship issues.

On Thursday, 26 March ministers will discuss the role of regulation in the Digital single market, and its proper functioning. The most important issues will be how to tackle the impact of regulatory fragmentation on consumers and business operating online, how to remove territorial restrictions, and how to achieve fair and open access in a digital environment. The ministers will also discuss how to ensure connectivity by removing technical barriers and obstacles to interoperability.

On Friday, 27 March within the second working session ministers and high level experts will focus on the challenges and opportunities presented by the digital transformation of industry. Discussions will cover the mainstreaming of digital innovations in industry, facilitating the use of big data and addressing the need for digital skills and business knowledge. Ensuring the right balance between intellectual property rights and standardisation processes is important for opening new markets and this will also be one of the discussion issues. Other relevant topics are assessing legislation and identifying regulatory barriers and cross border access to digital infrastructure across the EU.

The closing session will be devoted to discussions on the need to stimulate digital entrepreneurship and to create a favourable environment for growth of European SMEs and tech startups. Ministers will address the creation of a single European entrepreneurial space, creating a level playing field between online and traditional businesses, starting up and operating a business online, promoting access to digital, entrepreneurial and leadership skills, as well as access to finance and e-government and open data issues.

As is customary, the informal meeting of Competitiveness Ministers will conclude with a press conference, to be held by the Minister for Economics of Latvia Dana Reizniece-Ozola, and the Commissioner for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs Elżbieta Bieńkowska.

Press conference:

Friday, on 27 March at 15:00.

Working sessions, Handshakes, Doorsteps, Tour-de-table and Press conference can be followed by live streaming on www.eu2015.lv.
