

Ladies, Gentlemen,

I am honoured to address the ITU Forum on "Towards 5G Enabled Gigabit Society". My only regret is that I cannot be there in person.

Digital Single Market is among the 10 top priorities of this Commission and Connectivity and 5G are its fundament.

In this European vision, 5G is expected to be the enabler for all digital services by providing connectivity to people, wherever they live, work, gather or travel.

In line with our strategy for Digitising the European Industry, 5G will transform the economy by providing wireless connectivity to all objects – whenever beneficial - including vehicles, machines, and sensors.

The European Commission is highly committed to the success of 5G in Europe.

The 5G Action Plan, which the Commission adopted in 2016, is setting Europe's strategy to reach ambitious connectivity targets, in particular to launch 5G in one city per Member State by 2020 and to enable a comprehensive deployment by 2025.

This Action Plan was reinforced by Member States in July 2017 when EU ministers signed the Tallinn Declaration on 5G calling on Member States to deepen cooperation on 5G.

In this declaration, Member States highlighted that 5G is global so we also need global 5G standards.

Last December, I wrote to the 3rd Generation Partnership Project (3GPP) urging them to step up their efforts to meet the deployment targets and to address a wide range of 5G use cases.

In two weeks we are hosting in our premises in Brussels the workshop preparing the submission of the 3GPP specifications to the ITU.

It is a crucial milestone towards global availability of 5G specifications, supporting global interoperability.

Furthermore, the agreement on the Electronic Communications Code will be important for investment in 5G, such as the deployment of small cells and the investment in infrastructure; and also better coordinated spectrum license terms.

We have been encouraging Member States to deliver 5G in a much more concerted and expeditious way than it was the case of 4G.

This culminated at the end of last year by the adoption of the 5G roadmap, initiated by the Commission and agreed by the ministers at the Telecom Council.

Member States should now advance national roadmaps and promote the cross-border dimension of their 5G trials, including vertical sectors.

To this aim, the Communications Committee of Member States representatives (COCOM) have tasked a working group to exchange best practices on 5G deployment strategy.

The group presented last month its conclusions in a comprehensive report on best practices to support Member States in the development of their national approaches around the common EU objectives.

A prime example where cross-border cooperation has started is 5G corridors for Connected and Automated Driving and we are calling for the support of this pan-EU process.

The Commission has recently launched 3 large-scale 5G corridor trial projects in the context of the 5G Public-Private Partnership and – as next step – has proposed deployment funding instruments for 5G Corridors in the Multi-Annual Financial Framework, as part of the €3 billion for Connecting Europe Facility Digital.

In this context we are pleased with the efforts the Hellenic Republic, the host of this conference, is undertaking to establish 5G cross-border corridors with its neighbouring countries.

From our side we will continue to roll out digital cross-border corridors for self-driving vehicles and provide guidance on data management, cybersecurity and connectivity where needed.

Partnerships involving a broad range of stakeholders, including Member States and industry, will continue to play an important role under Horizon Europe.

We count on you to continue working with the Commission services to shape the ongoing and future programmes on 5G and smart networks for the benefit of Europe.