

Reding welcomes ICOMP debate on an Open Internet and a Competitive Online Marketplace for the EU

Commissioner Viviane Reding (Information Society and Media) today was handed the first copy of the 'Internet Imperatives', a charter produced by ICOMP, the Initiative for a Competitive Online Marketplace (www.i-comp.org) as part of a wider effort to increase support across industries and among regulators for principles promoting a healthy and competitive online environment.

The document highlights some of the key issues facing the digital economy, from healthy competition and privacy, to intellectual property and transparency. It is intended as the starting point for a debate among policy-makers, industry and the general public on the concrete steps to be taken by the incoming European Commission and the recently elected European Parliament in the new parliamentary term to address the key challenges facing the digital world.

The launch took place at a lunch debate in the European Parliament hosted by Alexander Alvaro, the German Liberal MEP who is one of the Parliament's most outspoken experts on internet issues. The event, chaired by Lord Watson of Richmond, ICOMP's Chairman, was attended by 20 MEPs, as well as officials, industry representatives and journalists.

The lunch was followed by a business roundtable, the first in a series to be organised by ICOMP to discuss the implementation of the Imperatives. The roundtable addressed the issue of transparency in the online marketplace on the basis of the first ICOMP White Paper, entitled "Openness and the Internet". The paper takes a critical look at the extent to which the operation of the search advertising marketplace is open and transparent to advertisers and publishers.

"ICOMP's members believe the current lack of transparency in online advertising is of crucial importance to tomorrow's economy, particularly as those doing business on the internet become increasingly dependent on online advertising revenues to fund the creation of quality online content," Lord Watson said. "The recent economic downturn has brought about a focus on accountability. It therefore stands to reason that there is great interest in this subject both within Brussels and across Europe."

About ICOMP:

ICOMP is an industry initiative for organisations and policy makers involved in the online marketplace, which aims to draw up and build widespread support for principles that underpin a competitive, transparent, privacy friendly, and secure online marketplace. ICOMP is funded by member contributions as well as sponsorship from Microsoft. Burson-Marsteller acts as its secretariat.

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