



The Europe Debate: Do UK technology companies benefit from EU membership? Is the Digital Single Market good for UK business?

Tuesday 4th February, 6.00pm – 9.00pm
Grand Committee Room, Houses of Parliament

Panellists:

- Bill Cash, Member of Parliament for Stone, Chair, European Scrutiny Committee
- Julian David, CEO, tech UK
- Graeme Hobbs, Chairman, Motorola Solutions
- Stephen Booth, Research Director, Open Europe

Moderator: Charles Arthur, Technology Editor, The Guardian

Hosts: Chi Onwurah MP & Stephen Mosley MP, Co-chairs, PICTFOR

Overview

According to CBI figures, 80% of their business members support the UK's membership of the EU¹. The EEF reports an 85% approval rating across the UK manufacturing industry². How supportive are UK technology companies of EU membership?

The desirability of accessing a single market of 500 million consumers is clear. Access to such a market can be an important business advantage for some UK technology companies, especially considering the size of the domestic market open to their US competitors. However, it is a matter of debate the extent to which the social, political and regulatory bundle associated with EU membership benefits or detracts from a healthy business environment. Like any democratic institution based on communication and collaboration, it is unlikely that it will ever be perfect, but it is vital for industry to carefully assess the overall impact that EU membership has on their businesses. Particularly now, during a period of national debate on the EU, the UK technology industry must be clear whether or not the perceived costs of membership outweigh the benefits. The UK is rapidly making a name for itself as an international technology hub. The breadth of UK tech sector expertise is widely acknowledged, stretching from the collaborative and innovative start-ups of the silicon roundabout to the array of international technology companies that have chosen the UK as their European headquarters.

“Lives have gone digital—so the single market must go truly digital too.”

- President Herman Van Rompuy, October 2013

Is the UK technology sector well placed to benefit from a properly functioning Digital Single Market?

The single market can benefit UK companies, but improved market access comes at a price. Companies conducting business across all member states currently have to negotiate 27 different contract laws and tax systems, increasing the bureaucracy and cost of doing business and raising the barriers to entry for SMEs looking to expand into European markets. Establishing a Digital Single Market has been expressed as a top priority for the European Commission; the objective is bold, to create a single European Digital Market by 2015, which aims to increase GDP by 5% and create 3.8 million new jobs.³

A successful transition to a Digital Single Market has the capacity to help the Eurozone meet the business challenges and opportunities of the 21st century. Amidst calls for a UK renegotiation of its membership of the EU, and the debate whether to widen but not deepen the relationship between members, altering the regulatory burden on business or providing greater R&D incentives, of prime importance must be to ensure that UK technology companies are in a position to realise the economic potential of a properly functioning Digital Single Market.

¹ Confederation of British Industry, [Our Global Future](#), November 2013

² EEF: The Manufacturers' Organisation, [Manufacturing: Our future in Europe](#), October 2013

³ European Commission, [The Digital Agenda for Europe \(DAE\)](#), A Europe 2020 Initiative

Delegates list

Julian David	TechUK	Andy Smith	BCS Security Community of Expertise
Graeme Hobbs	Motorola	Fiona Coughlan	Home Office
Bill Cash MP		Bernard Geoghegan	Digital Realty
Stephen Booth	Open Europe	Andrew Yeates	ERA
Charles Arthur	The Guardian	Kristof Claesen	IWF
John O'Sullivan		Nick White	International Telecoms User Group
Carolyn Kimber	CMA	Rick Chandler	CMA
Philip Virgo		Mike Lister	
David Abrahams	Nominet	Tony Clayton	IPO
Richard Anning	ICAEW	Jonathan Zokay	Burson Marstelle
Stephen Pattison	ARM Holdings plc	Toby Denselow	Burson Marstelle
Frank Domoney	BYOD toolkit	Jude Umeh	Capgemini
Philip Candice	Huawei	Stanislava Kunovska	techUK
Lord Inglewood		Paul Excell	iesquared
Jonathan Cornthwaite	Wedlake Bell LLP	Sarah Burnett	BCSWomen
Hugh Brookes	CoreFiling Limited	Nigel Ashcroft	Cornwall Development Company
Charlotte Holloway	BSG	John Newton	Fujitsu
Lalage Clay	e-Skills	Naureen Khan	TechUK
David Harding	DTG	Aman Sharma	FBCS CIPT
James Kay	Trip advisor	Martin Williams	Camford Management Consultants
Ben Hawes	BIS	Tony Fish	AMF Ventures
Mike Kiely		Ajmal Sulliman	Crabtree Property Management LLP
Mark Swarbrick	DCMS	Shakeeb Niazi	N-Tire Systems
Richard Lindsay-Davies	Digital TV Group	David Frank	EE
Mark Detre	Westminster Advisers	David Burnet	FBCS CITP
Mike Hurst	Virgin Media	Charalampos Margiolakiotis	
Sameen Farouks		Dalim Basu	DSL IT Risk Management Consultancy
Richard Sarson		Mike O'Neill	Baycloud Systems
Harley Faggetter	Pirate Party	Stephen Ogden	Pirate Party
Sarb Sembhi			