

## Commissioner Navracsics - Meeting with [REDACTED], President of Microsoft International Brussels, 24 March 2015

### Steering note

#### **Description of the context, the agenda and the issues to be discussed**

This is a courtesy meeting with the president of Microsoft International, likely intended as a follow-up to the 11 December conference on "Education in the Digital Era" organised by DG EAC.

#### **Participants**

[REDACTED] has worked for Microsoft Corp. for more than 20 years. Since 2005 he has been the President of Microsoft International B.V., a Dutch subsidiary of Microsoft Corporation responsible for all sales, marketing and services activities for the regions outside of North America.

#### **Our objective**

- To learn about new products/offerings by Microsoft
- To stress that we are interested in cooperation wherever beneficial

#### **The organiser's objective**

It can be expected that Microsoft will want to (a) foster good cooperation with the Commission, (b) present their newest projects/products and (c) hear about the Commission agenda on (digital) education.

#### **Line to take**

- Note our appreciation of Microsoft's work in the educational field.
- Express our desire to continue working together where it is beneficial for European teachers and learners (for example, this might be on projects promoting general digital competences (including coding) or on providing classroom technologies/developing pedagogies).
- Stress that we are obliged/committed to be technologically neutral and do not intend to endorse individual existing products or services. In particular, we believe that 'free and open source software' (FOSS), as well as open educational resources, can be complementary if not more beneficial than software/resources provided for-profit, such as by Microsoft.

#### **Difficulties to expect**

**Microsoft was not invited to speak at the "Education in the Digital Era" conference.** However, Digital Europe, which represents the digital technology industry in Europe, had a speaker on stage; Microsoft is a member of that organisation.

*[If the issue of trust/security of educational data arises]* **Microsoft will stress that their business model is not based on exploiting user 'data', like that of Google or Facebook, but rather on 'selling software', which they believe makes Microsoft a more trustworthy company.**

We are committed to stay technologically neutral and not express preference or support for certain companies. Government actors are naturally cautious about placing student data into the hands of companies and we will watch closely to see that European data protection rules are applied, and whether adjustments are needed.

