Minutes of meeting between Cabinet Bieńkowska and Google on 5 October 2017

Subject: **B2B Relations on Online Platforms and Platforms' Impact on the Economy**

Participants

[redacted]	Senior Director of Public Policy & Government Relations for Europe
[redacted]	Director, EU Public Policy & Government Relations
[redacted]	Manager, EU Public Policy & Government Relations
Kristian Hedberg	Deputy Head of Cabinet Bieńkowska
[redacted]	DG GROW/E4

I. Ongoing work following DG COMP's enquiries

Mr [redacted] advised that Google is working on ways to remedy certain of their practices with DG COMP and have launched an appeal, to seek legal clarity rather than dispute the spirit of the decisions made against them.

II. B2B relations on online platforms

Mr Hedberg confirmed that the Impact Asessment was ongoing and that no decisions had yet been taken.

Mr [redacted] expressed a concern about the added value of a possible legislative proposal, given the work Google was already doing to improve transparency and redress. He advised that Google makes available information on how search works through publications (similarly with Google Play), without exposing search to gaming (1,000 signals go into one search) and bearing in mind the constant evolution as more and more searches are carried out and Google constantly innovates. Mr [redacted] warned of the dangers of forcing too much transparency, due to its negative effects on competition. Mr [redacted] invited further discussion with the Search Engineering team in Munich and expressed a willingness to continue to engage with the Commission's fact finding exercises, including the upcoming workshop organised by DG CNECT.

III. Data

Mr [redacted] emphasised that data itself is of limited value, but when it is organised in the right way it can have tremendous value. He also expressed that 'big data' was a misleading term and 'vast data' was more appropriate. When data sets grow too big, the likelihood of false correlations increase. Moreover, sifting through all the data is very expensive. The trick therefore is to organise the data into meaningful sets so you can make discoveries without being swamped with meaningless or spurious correlations.

'Onership' is not really the right approach to data, but rather 'governance': how do we govern data so that we maximise welfare. Property rights are traditionally based on scarcity, but scarcity is not the issue with data.

Mr [redacted] also advised that Google believed in open data flows and that this had benefits within the internal market. He was surprised that there was almost no discussion about Chinese operators and about how much data was flowing to China. Mr [redacted] felt that Europe could benefit from really achieving the digital single market and harmonisation and standardisation that can afford interoperability could offer a competitive advantage. He expressed that Europe had the richest set of health data that could be taken advantage of and similar progress could be made with transport data if it was further developed. By the same token, if Europe fails to establish a proper (digital) single market, risk to lose the investments and cutting edge activities to those jurisdictions where a large market is available.

Mr [redacted] advised that Google does share data for example from Google Maps with cities and in advertising, Google does not have an objecion to sharing an index and provides data trends, in a less granular manner than Google has internally, to advertising bodies.

IV. EU Industry

Mr [redacted] advised of the work Google does to support the digitalisation of industry, highlighting the importance of public/private partnerships to develop digital skills. He cited success stories in Italy, where as part of the European Youth Guarantee, they had worked with SME craftsmen to teach the value of digital advertising, and other positive experiences in the Nordic countries and Germany.

V. Future in Europe

Mr [redacted] advised that Google is investing a lot in Europe, particularly given its strengths with some data sets and its leading position on artificial intelligence. He however, expressed that the limitations caused by the fragmentation of the single market and different regulatory markets was a deterrent to investment generally especially when compared to the ease of entry (from a regulatory perspective) to the sizeable market of the US.

The roll out of autonomous vehicles may occur sooner than first thought. Google are looking for partners, particularly in urban areas, and are exploring ideas of whether autonomous cars can be an additional public transport option especially in those towns which have car-free zones. He felt that issues concerning liability could be overcome with a good transitional policy. Mr [redacted] also highlighted that the data connected to such cars, could be shared (save for user data) with multiple parties including public auhorities, so all could benefit.

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