

The international impact of Europe's new Digital Single Market rules



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Europe's Digital Single Market (DSM) is one of those policies that may look like a collection of buzzwords, but really has the power to change Europe – and the world. In a recent meeting with staff at a New Zealand ministry, I learned that there is huge interest overseas in a broad range of DSM concepts such as e-ID, new privacy rules and even Europe's approach to mobile and data roaming. First, you need to understand the Digital Single Market at all. The underlying objective is very simple: *To create a common market for digital goods and services for all European citizens.* However, the many different aspects of the DSM are still composed of a collection of policies at this time, ranging from mobile phone regulation to buying things online, from TV broadcast rules to the regulation of streaming services in Europe. Now, I would like to give you a brief overview about the developments of the DSM, which has been taken so far:

- **Mobile phone & data roaming:** The principle of “roam like home” may be an European effort to add a layer of simplicity to complex service contracts, but it has been hugely successful in reducing costs for many EU citizens. Ever since the introduction of the new regulation, data roaming has been exploding in the EU and many European feel more comfortable now that they can use Google Maps and other useful services when travelling without the fear of excessive phone bills.
- **General Data Protection Regulation:** These rules aimed at improved privacy, but also added a whole range of information rights for consumers. As a company processing private data, you now need to follow EU rules as soon as you deal with EU citizens' data – regardless of where your company is located.. Another essentially European idea of the DSM is the concept of a “right to information”. This is the idea that whenever you are subject to a decision made by an algorithm you should be informed. Although the original idea of “explaining” the algorithmic decision was watered down to mere information, it is still a powerful concept soon to be taken up by governments outside Europe.

These are two examples of the international impact of the DSM, but there are many others. The European approach to an e-ID for its citizens is closely monitored by many governments worldwide. The e-ID aims to help public administrations and private Service Providers extending the use of their online services to citizens from other European countries. Also, there are now

new rules in place for streaming services. They aim to ensure that European citizens can consume their streaming programmes wherever they travel in Europe – without being restricted by country borders.

It is safe to assume that European policy makers have not been fully aware of the international aspect of the DSM. But it is an opportunity for other countries to see what they like about these new ideas and to critically discuss what they see as problematic. Most importantly, the DSM is an opportunity to point out some European values in discussion with the EU's international partners.



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