

OFE STATEMENT on the Commission Communication “Towards a thriving data-driven economy”

4 July 2014

Given the very recent developments on several topics of the digital agenda, OpenForum Europe (OFE) would like to comment on the Big Data Communication ([“Towards a thriving data-driven economy”](#)) recently released by the Commission.

We welcome the Commission's efforts to support open standards in different "big data areas" (p.9 of the Communication), as they are indeed key to ensure interoperability. We would express caution, however, about the idea of creating new "EU-wide" standards. True open standards are by nature global, and we believe that in many of the sectors that are mentioned in the Communication, existing or emerging standards can already fulfil many of the objectives sought. In this regard, we would suggest that the Commission makes use of the ICT Multi-Stakeholder Platform by working with the standards setting organisations present on clarifying on the current landscape on standards related to big data and open data rather than looking at developing new standards (unless a clear market gap has been identified).

While acknowledging the clear focus on enabling and further developing infrastructure to support the management of big data sets, such as cloud computing (p.9 of the Communication), we would express caution on the idea put forward in the Communication of proposing new regulation in this field. The self / co-regulatory approach which has been followed up to now has proven effective, and considering that cloud computing is still an emerging and fast changing market, we fear this would risk hurting innovation. We strongly consider that, for the moment, cloud computing should remain a market-led sector.

Regarding text and data-mining (TDM), we find it disappointing that although there is sound evidence of the outstanding added value of reaping full benefits from unhindered TDM, the

Commission still lacks ambition regarding its intended measures (p. 11). Investigation activities on how to enhance data analysis have started a couple of years ago and we consider that we reached a moment when the conclusions of such investigations should start to be implemented, if the EU is not to lose talent and investment opportunities to more favourable research locations.

In addition, the remark that the Commission is making on page 4 (footnote 7), that “traditional data mining tools [are] designed to handle mainly low-variety, small scale and static datasets, often manually” is inaccurate, since the entire idea behind TDM is to automate the process, in order to get the most comprehensive results, in the shortest period of time. TDM can also be used for large scale datasets.

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