

PRESS RELEASE

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OFE welcomes the European Commission's Cloud Computing Strategy and its focus on harnessing the buying power of the public sector

OpenForum Europe supports the European Commission's determination to make Europe 'cloud active', as outlined in Commission Vice President Neelie Kroes' speech in Davos today.

We share her view that cloud computing has the potential to be a game-changer for our economy. If properly harnessed it will boost innovation and productivity and provide benefits for businesses of all sizes as well as for individuals.

The decision to avoid building a European super-cloud is a wise one. Europe is not alone in identifying the opportunities cloud computing provides. Europe will need to co-operate with other parts of the world in what is now recognized as a global phenomenon.

OFE applauds the determination of VP Kroes to protect users in the cloud by ensuring that their data is protected, and can be freely moved from one provider to another without encountering technical obstacles. Cloud computing should be just like the Internet itself - firmly based on principles of transparency, open access and open standards.

Governments must ensure these same principles are adopted in cloud computing. If they don't there is a danger that users – companies, governments and individuals – will find themselves locked into the proprietary cloud offerings of one sole provider, as is so common in desk top computing. We must not allow this sort of lock-in to re-emerge in the cloud.

The announcement of funding for a European Cloud Partnership, involving public authorities and industry is a welcome catalyst for wider action and an opportunity to build a proactive agenda in the market.

VP Kroes' focus on the role of the public sector strikes the right tone. While the private sector is already embracing cloud computing, governments need to play an active role and

set a good example. As she points out, public procurement of IT represents a massive chunk of Europe's IT industry. OFE consistently has stated this is the single most important way that Government can influence market behaviour.

A change in public procurement behaviour is undeniably required. OFE's regular procurement monitoring report (the latest to be announced next week) will again illustrate how a significant, and not diminishing, proportion of the public sector continue to ignore EC guidelines and EU legislation. As a result, a significant proportion of government agencies and departments across the continent remain the victims of lock-in.

The Commission's cloud computing strategy offers an opportunity for the public sector to avoid this problem as it navigates its way into the cloud.

OFE CEO Graham Taylor concluded: "The announcement of the European Cloud Partnership is exactly the co-operative initiative needed to change this behaviour and instill confidence, if Europe is to maximize the Cloud opportunity and not be left behind. As VP Kroes has said in the past "we must practice what we promote". In other words, implementation by the public sector will be key."

[Link to Speech](#)

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