

**8:58 to 9:06**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for doing me the honour of attending the Global Forum 2012, which, I am sure, is going to be yet another success.

I would like to point out that this forum is happening at a very special moment, as Sweden, host of this Global Forum, and France, the country I represent, will adopt their Digital agenda in a few months.

From the French side, our IT minister, Ms Fleur Pellerin, presented on the 10th October 2012 the outlines of the coming French digital strategy. The detailed plan will be made public in February 2013, but let me detail a bit what the French government wants to achieve.

**Our first objective** is to reduce the digital gap. We want to reach a 100% coverage of the French territory with broadband. We want all our citizens to have access to digital technologies, regardless of their age, background or where they live. How? Of course directly by extending the network. But also by creating “digital public spaces”. And also through pedagogy, as many still do not dare to go digital because of their lack of knowledge. Or at least because some are still afraid they don’t know enough of this expert field.

**The second objective** of our strategy is to safeguard our values in a context of fast changes resulting from the development of digital technology. What does that mean? We need to guarantee freedom of expression and compliance with privacy. And we need to make sure that the most fragile users are protected. Those of you who have children surfing the internet, chatting with digitalized friends and posting personal details understand me too well. We don’t want anybody to be left behind, in terms of safety either.

**Third**, we want ICT to be the main vector of growth in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. That means ICT should be at the source in terms of innovation and R&D. To do so, we are necessarily going to face some challenges. Regarding sovereignty, regarding network and data security, regarding technological independence and legal security. It becomes also essential to consider the adaptation of taxation of the different online businesses.

**Another objective** of the French government plans to develop the international attractiveness of France in the digital world. To reach this ambition and to make Paris a capital of digital technology, we are planning to create a giant digital cluster in the Paris region. As a French ambassador here in Sweden, my mind immediately turns to the Kista cluster as a very impressive model.

**Finally**, we want e-administration to have its own, ambitious roadmap and we will publish it by the end of this year.

**To sum up the French agenda:** increased access, reinforced safety, more growth and innovation, develop education and State modernization. I can’t help noticing that these objectives put forward by our IT minister are very similar to the Swedish goals, presented by Minister Hatt in October 201.

I believe both our countries now look in the same direction and have understood the challenges we will face. On top of these two agendas, we both have a common, European digital agenda. I don't want to enter into too many details but I think it includes some very promising priorities such as standardization, increased interoperability, security, broadband infrastructure, and research and innovation. It is indeed estimated that an investment of one billion euros in digital infrastructure would lead to an increase of 0.1 per cent of growth.

**And finally** I would like to conclude by saying that I am very happy to see that so many of you are here today: as the ICT have proved in the past 30 years, sharing information is making everybody stronger.

***Sylviane Toporkoff: [...] To what extent could the Digital Agenda boost economic growth in Europe?***

***Jean-Pierre Lacroix:***

This is an excellent question, thank you. Europe is facing today a severe crisis and I believe everybody has now come to understand that the only way to get out of this crisis is growth. So how can information technologies help with this major challenge and boost economic growth?

**There are very many ways how ICT can boost growth but I would like to focus on 3 concrete examples:**

**First and probably the most obvious way:** the ICT sector is booming. In the very beginning, ICTs were all about a human person exchanging information with another human person. Let's just say a human talking to another to make things simple. Then ICT was all about the so-called human-machine interface. Today, the next frontier is machine-to-machine communication and we know that there are more than 50 billion of them around the world; you can barely imagine the incredible potential ICTs still have in front of them.

**Second way of boosting growth with ICT:** The indirect channel of global productivity. Information technologies enable productivity gains, especially in the field of processing information, data storage and exchange of information. For thirty years, ICTs have fundamentally changed lifestyles and communication, professional practice, social and cultural customs. It is not exaggerated to consider that ICTs allowed a revolution of production, distribution and consumption processes. Taking a macro perspective, several studies show that during the past twenty years, information technologies have accounted for more or less half of the increase in productivity in Europe. That's how important ICTs are.

But that is not enough. During the last decade, ICTs were responsible for half of the growth in the United States, and not even 25% of growth in Europe. There is virtually no reason for that and there is therefore a potential here for Europe.

**As I said, there are many ways the ICT sector could boost growth in Europe, but let me give you a third and final example:** e-trade. In Europe, only 12% of companies are selling online. This is very

little. And among these 12%, the majority does not benefit of the full potential online market and only address their national market through a new channel. Basically, the European online market is still primarily the aggregation of national markets. The single market is a tremendous achievement. It had and still has a considerable impact on growth for each and every European country. Making the digital single market a reality would allow even more competition and productivity gain.