

**Cloud & Interoperability Center**  
**Opening keynote**  
**by Jean-Philippe Courtois, President of Microsoft International**

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Vice-President Kroes, Minister Cérexhe, guests – welcome and thank you for being here today.

Madame Vice President Kroes' recent speech at the World Economic Forum and her presence with us here today have proven that the EU has recognized the enormous potential of cloud computing both for the public sector and European businesses. We are thrilled to see the support from her and from the Commission, because at Microsoft, we believe firmly that the future of the digital economy is the cloud.

Today we are here to introduce our latest investment in helping advance the cloud in Europe – the Microsoft Cloud and Interoperability Center. There are two key components of this facility. The first is an Executive Briefing Center which will provide government representatives, customers and partners with demos of the latest public sector, enterprise and consumer cloud applications, allowing them to learn how to tap into the power of the cloud to help accelerate their goals for productivity improvements in their own operations and in how they provide services to their constituents and customers. Microsoft has also made great strides in making technology interoperable, and this center will help demonstrate our continuing commitment to transparency, collaboration and interoperability to meet the needs of customers and governments.

The second component is a Microsoft Innovation Center – or MIC. We define a MIC as a state of art facility built for collaboration on research, technology or software solutions, involving a combination of government, academic and industry participants. This MIC is a public-private partnership between Microsoft and the Brussels Regional Government, and it is the first MIC in the world focused entirely on the cloud. Its mission will be to incubate new cloud-based businesses by providing local ISVs and start-ups with training on how to build cloud solutions, and we expect it to create about 10 start-ups a year and about 50 new jobs. I am pleased that Minister Cérexhe of the Brussels Regional Government is here today to join us in this celebration.

We have invested €5.3M in this facility and associated programs because we believe that there's never been a more important time to invest in accelerating cloud adoption. Why...? The Centre of Economics and Business Research released a report saying cloud computing will add €763 billion in productivity to the top economies over the next five years.

We see three key drivers of cloud adoption: elasticity, scale and real-time access. I'd like to briefly discuss each.

When we talk about elasticity, we mean that with the public cloud, renting 1 machine for 1,000 hours will be equivalent to renting 1,000 machines for 1 hour, enabling us to rapidly accomplish complex tasks that were previously impossible because of cost or time constraints. This means that small companies or organizations can now tap into the same kind of computing power which was historically only available to the largest groups. Many of the demos you will see here in the Center were built by European SMEs, showing how the European software industry can exploit cloud power.

When we talk about scale, we mean that building a business on the cloud eliminates the need for a company to make capital investment in servers and storage – the costly infrastructure investments that have previously prevented a start-up from ever getting off the ground.

But it's not just businesses that are adopting the cloud today. In times of budget cuts, cloud technology gives government agencies a new way to create efficiencies with limited resources. New technologies on display here will provide a view into how the cloud can drive productivity improvements and cost savings that will help governments address both budget pressures and societal challenges such as health, education, research and the environment.

The truth is, the cloud has changed people's expectations about what government should be able to do for them. Today's citizens have an expectation for online ease of use and transparency. So while the cloud has created this expectation, it conveniently also presents a tremendous opportunity for improving government-citizen interaction. This points to the third game-changing attribute of the cloud – real-time access. The cloud puts the power of technology in the hands of the masses in new and interesting ways.

In fact, I'm very pleased to announce a new Public Sector customer who's adopting the cloud - the Regional Government of Catalonia. This will be one of the largest cloud projects in the Public Sector in Spain. The goal of this private cloud implementation is to equip 146,000 civil servants with cloud-based email via Microsoft Exchange 2010, helping them dramatically improve their ability to rapidly respond to and serve their citizens.

On a related note, today we are introducing the "Microsoft Connected Government Framework," detailed in a new whitepaper out today. We first started talking about the idea of a "Citizen Service Platform" in 2008. It was designed to help governments create innovative solutions that enabled efficiency, drove citizen engagement and created sustainable communities. This new Framework describes how the adoption of cloud computing can advance these aspirations, migrating from a platform to a framework to enable new levels of citizen-centric government, through the possibilities of cloud computing. Please make sure you get a copy of that paper here today to learn more about it.

So to close, I'd like to again express our commitment to working with the Brussels Regional Government and the European Commission to help accelerate cloud adoption to drive innovation and employment through the cloud. But of course we must be mindful that Europe's newborn cloud consciousness still faces crucial obstacles. Through this Center we look forward to partnering more closely with industry leaders, government and consumer organizations to work together toward globally consistent policy frameworks that will maximize the economic and social benefits of cloud computing for everyone. Vice-President Kroes, we are ready to partner with you to create a cloud-active Europe. With that, I'll give the floor to the Vice-President. Thank you.