

Emma McClarkin 25.5.2011

### **Speaking Notes - Game Development and Digital Growth**

Good afternoon everyone and welcome to the European Parliament. I'd like to start by thanking Dr Behrmann for proposing this event and to Jari-Pekka and everyone else at EGDF for their help in organising it.

It is a great pleasure to host an event on game development - a sector that underpins the importance of digital markets for economic recovery and sustainable growth. The possibilities are seemingly endless, with virtually every young person in Europe being introduced to various gaming platforms from an increasingly early age. From more traditional games like Guitar Hero and Halo, through to the massive new online multiplex of World of Warcraft, the games industry in Europe is diversifying and finding new ways to relate to their consumers.

Indeed, the European games industry has been a leading player in the world market, especially in the online sphere. Whilst the leading global publishers continue to be based mainly in the US and Japan, there is a growing momentum in Europe to take on this monopoly. In fact, in my constituency of the East Midlands, we have a thriving game development industry, with companies such as RARE, producing well-known titles like 'Kinect Sports' for the XBox and 'Perfect Dark'.

The gaming industry can help in facilitating innovation and competitiveness by supporting SMEs and creating jobs, especially for young people.

It spearheads a drive towards a truly digital era by creating new platforms and methods of interaction, facilitating cooperation and dialogue on a scale never imagined before.

More than this, however, it's social and cultural importance has been increasingly recognised by commentators, who can now see that millions of users interfacing in a game environment help to enhance international collaboration and mutual understanding.

It is therefore crucial that the specific needs of the European games industry are addressed and taken into consideration by the EU institutions, especially in terms of the Common Strategic Framework for EU research and innovation funding.

Moreover, it is vital that we address the concerns of SMEs, facilitating their access to finance, helping them benefit from the opportunities of the Single Market and adapting regulations to limit burdensome bureaucracy and red tape.

I hope that you have a fruitful and valuable discussion this afternoon and I'll now pass over to our Chair, Guillaume, for his opening remarks.