
EU HOSTS FIRST SUMMIT FULLY FOCUSED ON DIGITAL STAKES

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The first summit in European Union history wholly dedicated to digital issues begins on Friday.

And who better to host it than Estonia, which has transformed its post-Soviet economy in part through new technology.

One tech firm, specialising in international money transfers, wants the completion of the EUs Digital Single Market.

If we have a single digital market, we can expect people to pay lower prices for their international money transfers, said Lars Trunin of TransferWise.

Even though, for instance, in Europe we talk about a single euro payment area, in fact we still have 20 plus countries each making their own rules.

EU heads of state and government are at the summit focussed on building a digital future for Europe.

Some critics though believe the leaders are missing the point.

Individual internet users are more and more at the mercy of the policies of a few large companies, said German Pirate Party MEP Julia Reda.

The users themselves dont actually have that many rights and that much control about what is happening with their data and to make sure that the devices that they are using are secure. Unfortunately these questions are not at the top of the agenda of what is being discussed among the heads of states.

On the fringes of the summit, leaders are talking about wider stakes including French President Macrons ambitions for the EU, the fallout from Germanys election which saw Chancellor Merkel weakened by a surge in far-right support and of course, Brexit.

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