

Cable urges 'digital single market'



Netflix content varies wildly across the EU

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Britons should be able to access films and music purchased through online services such as Netflix wherever they are in the European Union, Vince Cable will tell an audience in Brussels.

The Business Secretary will claim that a digital single market in Europe would help consumers and provide a 340 billion euro (£260 billion) economic boost.

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (Bis) said the lack of a single market meant UK shoppers were often unable to take advantage of online special offers available on the continent and were nervous about buying from overseas because of confusion about their consumer rights.

Delivering a lecture to the Lisbon Council think-tank, Mr Cable will say: "In today's world of smartphones and wi-fi, consumers who have paid for a service rightly expect to be able to use it across borders in the EU.

"But at the moment we have a patchwork quilt of digital content and services - very good in some places, but threadbare in others.

"That's why I'm calling for the creation of a digital single market. Not only would this boost UK and Eurozone economies by 340 billion euro but it will make online prices fairer, enable start-ups to be formed within 24 hours, and help businesses sell throughout the EU."

Mr Cable's department said available content on online services such as Netflix varies wildly across the EU, and UK subscribers are often unable to stream content they have paid for when they are abroad.

Currently, over half of British consumers pay more to buy online in the UK rather than overseas, because they are unclear whether they can get a refund if something goes wrong, Bis said.