Ref. Ares(2016)5732156 - 03/10/2016

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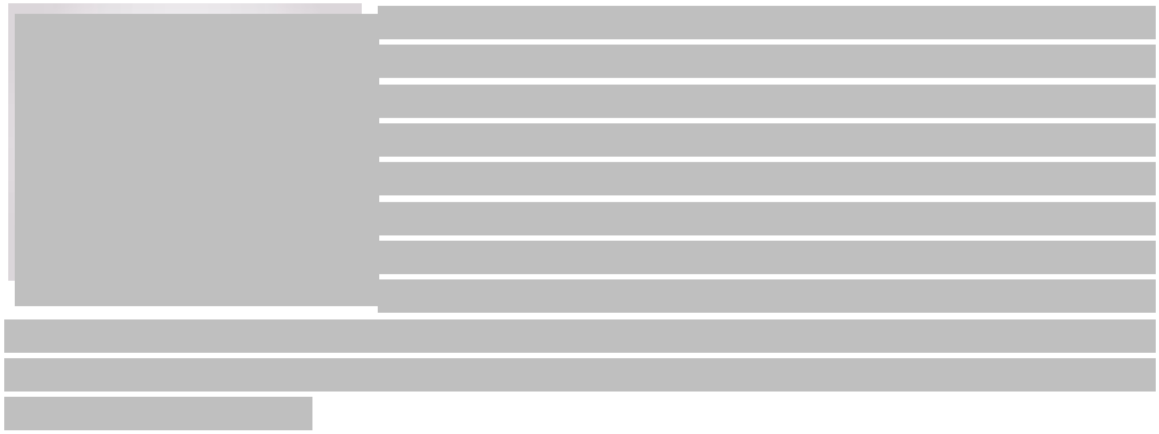

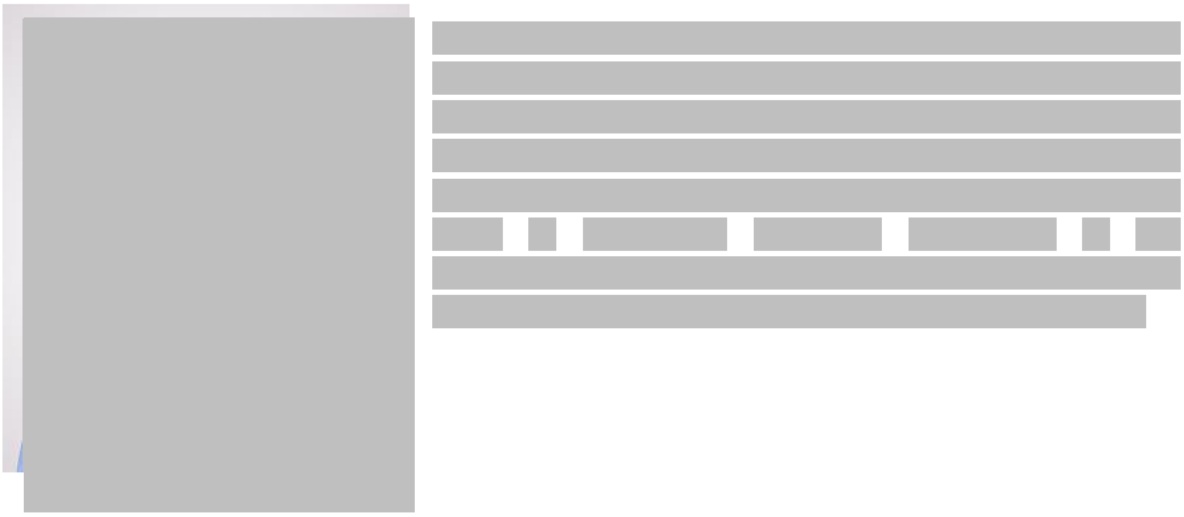

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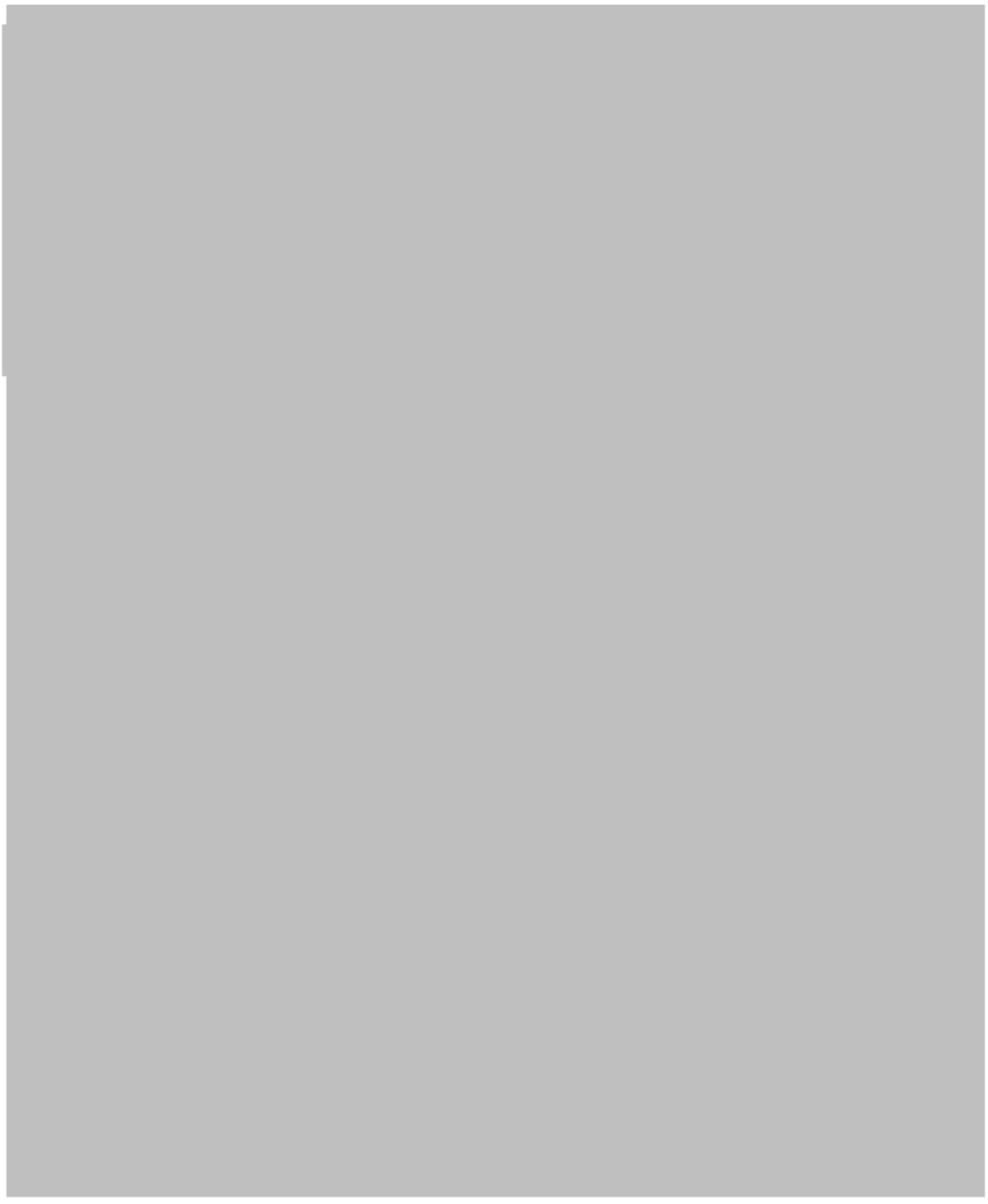

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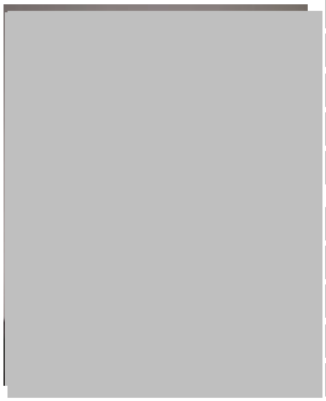

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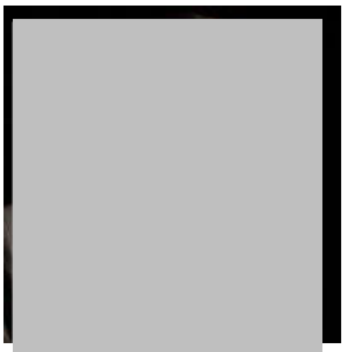

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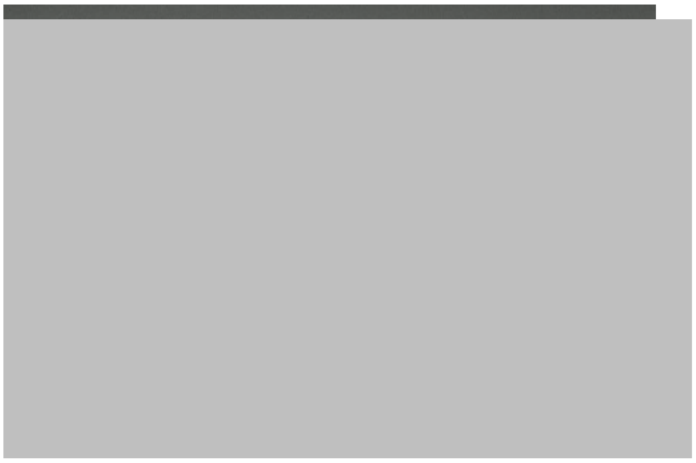

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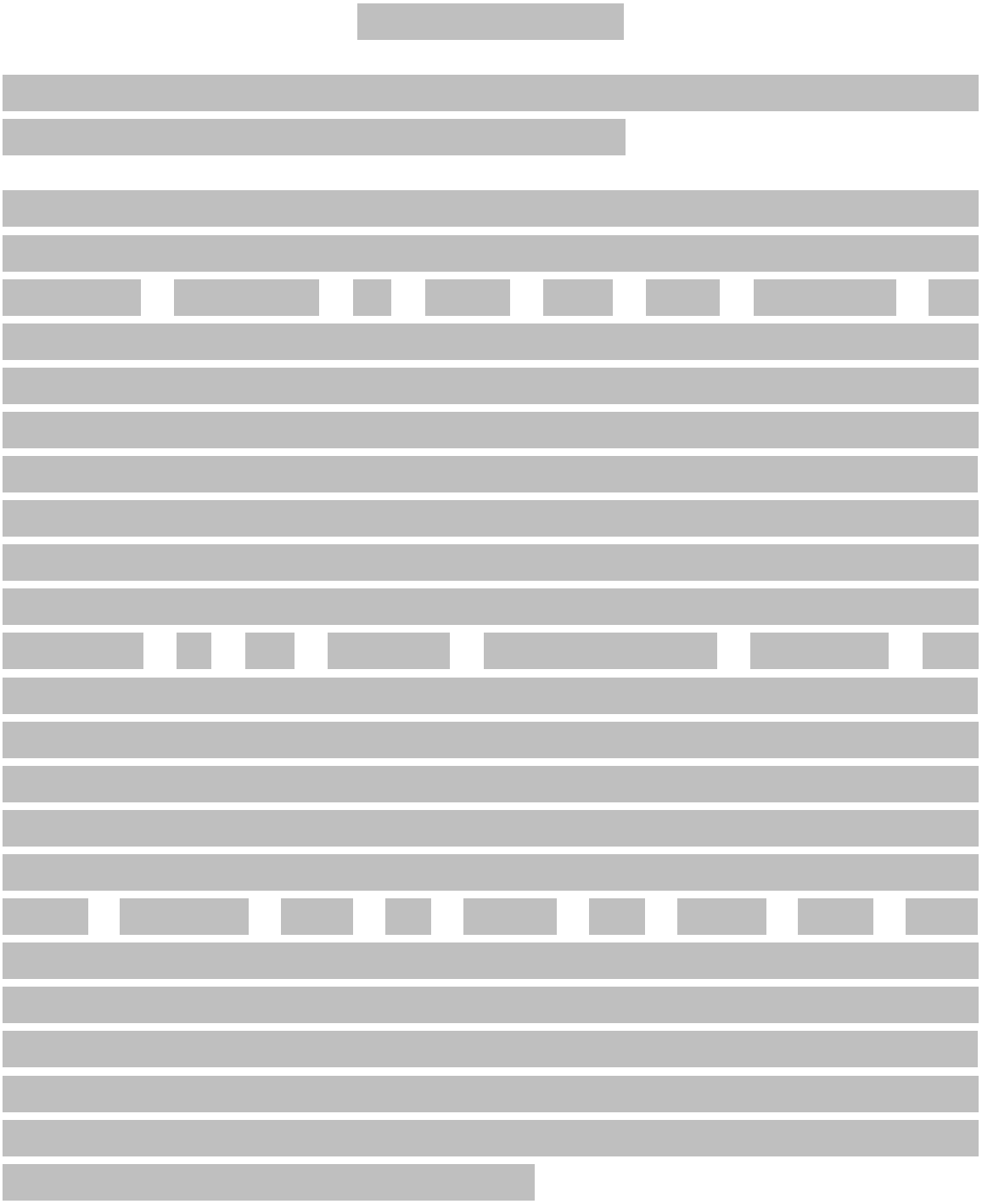

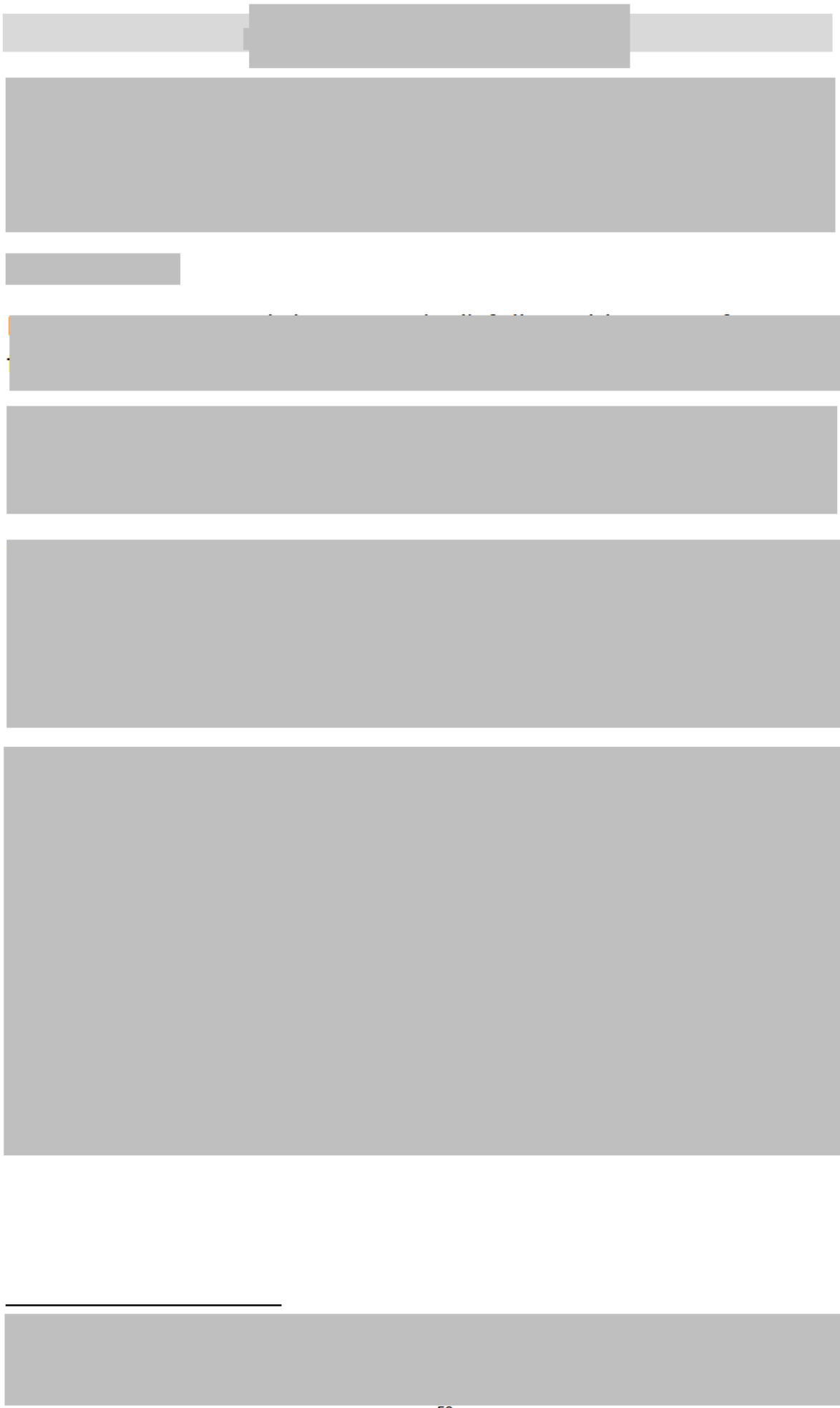

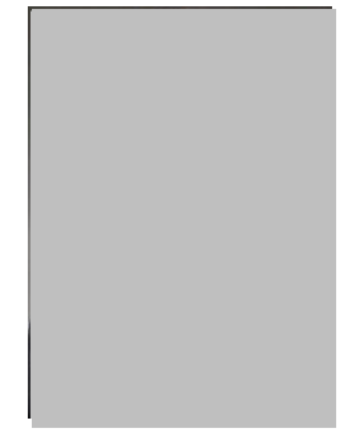

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4.2 Meeting with Microsoft – meeting with [redacted], EVP of Business Developments

Scene setter:

Format: HoloLens Overview (30'), discussion (30')

Microsoft HoloLens ("glasses-computer") mixes the virtual and real worlds to create a new reality. Digital information is overlaid on top of the physical world. Holograms let users visualize and work with the digital content in relation to the tangible world, unlocking new insights and possibilities. It is enabled by Windows 10 platform.

Microsoft is actively supporting start-up companies. Microsoft Ventures is a global initiative run by Microsoft with the goal to empower entrepreneurs around the world. The initiative supports start-ups at every stage of their life cycle, providing them with the tools, resources, knowledge and expertise they need to scale their company. The initiative includes Accelerator Program, an immersive 3-6 month program, where entrepreneurs get through the challenges of launching a company, finding customers and expending to global markets. Start-ups accepted into the program gain access to top business mentors, technical and marketing experts, office space and resources to help them scale their business. The accelerators are located in several cities around the world, including Bangalore, Beijing, Seattle and Tel-Aviv. There are 3 locations in Europe: Berlin (31 graduates), London (46 graduates) and Paris (65 graduates). In these locations 142 start-ups have been supported.

Objective of the meeting:

- Discuss disruptive technologies (such as Microsoft HoloLens) and the initiatives of Digital Single Market aimed at supporting digital transformation: digital innovation hubs, (Big) Data issues and standardisation.
- Discuss Microsoft role in the start-up ecosystem.

KEY messages

- The digital transformation of our economy and society brings along several challenges but also many opportunities.

- I am therefore glad to meet you to discuss how Microsoft is working on grasping the opportunities offered by new technologies and pushing the digitisation of industry especially.

- In Europe we are establishing a Digital Single Market of 500milliions of people. However, the fragmentation and barriers are still preventing to open up fully digital opportunities for people and business.

- The DSM initiatives are not aimed at protecting Europe from outside competition. On the contrary, we aspire to make Europe the best place to invest in digital technology for all market players.

- I was impressed by the Microsoft HoloLens technology. It is a example of the power of digital technology and their transformative power.

Big Data

- On Big Data, we believe that the role of public authorities is to create the preconditions for firms to lead innovation in this field.

- We need to make sure that access to data is non-discriminatory so that SMEs and start-ups can fully profit from the opportunities offered by data-driven innovation

- At the same time, there are challenges and questions around the emergence of big data.

- We aim to address especially issues such as localisation, liability, data ownership, IPR or usage rights.

- We want to give legal clarity while being very careful not to put a straightjacket on firms operating in a fast moving and globalised business area.

- So we are interested in your experience. To which extent are ad-hoc public initiatives on Big Data needed (if at all)? How do you see the role of public authorities in relation to this phenomenon?

- We have noticed that Microsoft has entered the Internet of Things platforms market with its Azure IoT Suite. How does Microsoft see the competition with other platforms and ecosystems? What role do you see for policymakers here?

- We are looking in Europe on how to upgrade the existing framework for start-ups and scale-ups. We can learn from your experience.

Microsoft Venture & Start-ups

- With its Single Market of 500 million people, Europe is not short of assets, talent or entrepreneurial ideas.

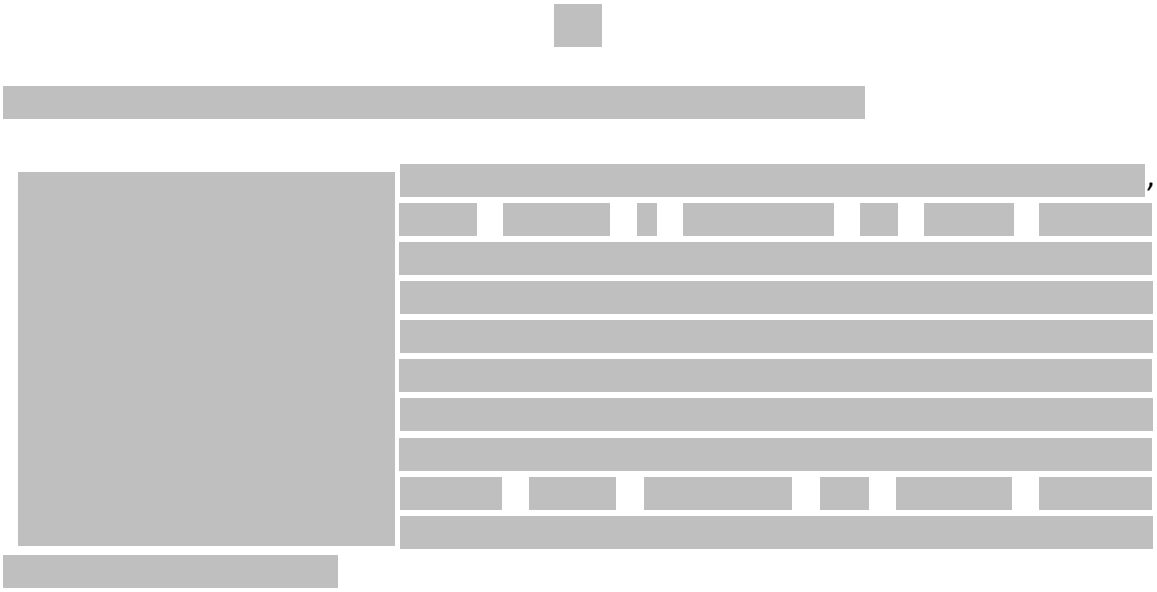
- But we need to better define and **scale-up our own European 'Valleys' model**. And this is why I am here. I want to see how it works, to understand the role of an accelerator. We are not here to copy but to learn and adapt our own approach.

- We are planning to make a new proposal to support start-ups and scale up in Europe.

- The experience of Microsoft Ventures is of interest for us. We want to understand better how an accelerator works.

- Since Microsoft is very active in Europe, what is your vision about Europe and Start-ups? What should we change in Europe?

- Could you tell us more about Microsoft Venture's investment strategy in Europe (sectors, size of company, and geography of investments)? Are you aware of any particular challenges to investing in European tech start-ups?
- Which are the best practices stemming from the Microsoft Accelerator programme?
- Do you see the differences on how the Accelerator works in your EU and US locations?



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