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## Our Digital Ambition: priorities for 2019-2024

*Digital technologies continue to benefit our well-being through making our daily lives easier. These advances have brought new technologies closer to us than ever before and are helping us tackle some of Europe's most important challenges. They are also enhancing business efficiency, making our objectives easier to obtain. Entire sectors are transforming and new business opportunities are being created. As Europe becomes more connected so does the world. While some competing regions share our values others do not. Who will emerge as the global writers of tomorrow's digital playbook?*

**Europe's digital identity stands equally between innovative freedom and guardians of societal interests. We stand up for European values in order to enable a human-centric, vibrant digital future that builds on technological break-throughs and takes society with it.**

**In view of 2019 – 2024 legislature, BusinessEurope calls on policymakers of the Commission, Council and Parliament, to:**

### **Create opportunities**

***To capitalise on the free market economy, support European competitiveness at a global level and enable every business to reach its potential in the digital era.***

Policy must permit innovation opportunities and provide legal predictability. Monitoring the market will foster growth and where failures arise, harmonised law making or enforcement actions will address uncompetitive conditions. As technology evolves, we need to ensure "smart regulation." Existing legislation should be reviewed and adapted to the greatest extent possible before new legislation is put in place. Where new rules are required, they must be robust, supported by specific impact assessments and ensure a level playing field amongst players offering the same services, both within and outside



the EU, under an evidence-based approach. Regulation should promote entrepreneurship and leave room for experimentation. In other cases, collaboration with industry, governments and civil society (e.g. through Code of Conduct use) could be a more effective way to address concerns in the fast-moving markets.

Europe needs a coherent industrial strategy to link individual initiatives as their success relies on one another (e.g. blockchain, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence (AI), privacy, supercomputing, platforms, infrastructure, data flows and microelectronics). This means relevant policy maker services and competences working closer together at all stages of the legislative process so that clear actions are put forward to reach Europe's future digital ambitions. The public sector can also lead Europe's "digital by default" ambitions by fully applying technologies that businesses and citizens can both benefit from when they encounter their services.

## **Support people to reach their potential and succeed**

***To ensure our citizens are equipped to thrive in a more digitalised world.***

Digitalisation offers employees greater opportunities to fulfil safer and rewarding tasks. It also has the ability to improve efficiency and therefore offer a greater work life balance. Yet as automation proliferates at a greater pace than ever before, the skills required to take part in these new tasks will need continuous updating. All citizens, including those involved in the gig economy, should feel included and be able to benefit both from the opportunities and protection that digital transformation offers. New technologies like AI should augment human capital. Digital can help integrate the most vulnerable segments of society and ensure they are not left behind throughout this digital revolution.

A great investment in human capital is needed. This begins with basic digital education at early curricular levels. Basic and advanced science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and investing in digital skills are also fundamental for the next industrial revolution to be a success. Other non-STEM disciplines that continuously interact with STEM-based working roles (e.g. marketing, legal or HR professionals) will also be crucial for promoting digital skills. Support is needed to aid critical decision making (particularly as AI is rolled-out). Up-skilling and lifelong learning will support the inclusion of all as new technologies emerge. These initiatives need to be coordinated with other policies (eg. removal of barriers to student and business expert migration in deep-tech domains). Vocational Education and Training (VET) and public-private partnerships can also help to achieve this.



## Enable trust

***To enable continued investment in our digitalised economy and create greater opportunities, ensure our businesses and citizens are protected online.***

Trust relies on taking a measured ethical approach to new technologies that understands its development and uptake. Explainability and dialogue is key for people to feel comfortable about the use of their data. The ethical use of technologies, such as AI and algorithms by businesses is also key. People expect to be able to enjoy fair, competitive and non-discriminatory digital services.

We should also continue cybersecurity capacity building and awareness raising, providing cybersecurity knowledge and technical assistance to SMEs and more traditional sectors. Voluntary cybersecurity schemes and standards should be fit for market and the purpose they seek to achieve to ensure broad uptake. Sharing of best practices in terms of prevention needs to be encouraged and national responses to threats need to be coordinated. A European response to growing cyber-enabled economic espionage is urgently required. Certification schemes to support 5G infrastructure could be envisaged without undermining trade secrets or source code.

## Foster knowledge to succeed

***To back political ambition with full financial support to continue enabling the digital transformation of European industry through research, development and real-world testing.***

We should build on the strength of our research, development and innovation capacities with increased investment programs. Particularly those that match ambitious policy frameworks that promote Key Enabling Technologies (KETs) (eg. AI, Robotics, Quantum Computing, Semiconductors and Microelectronics – where we are beginning to lose our competitive edge). Investment in research and the later stages of development are also needed to massively roll-out new ideas, start-ups and scale-ups. Disruptive business models should be supported. Equally important is to increase the well-functioning system of private-public partnerships, which support close-to-market innovation.

Applied research should be championed in order for Europe's companies to offer the solutions that would answer our real-life problems. Building on these capacities is strategic and should therefore encompass our ideals. Full Reinforcement of our Digital Innovation Hubs could aid common industrial platforms to bring the physical and digital world together.



## Improve access to opportunities

***To build on the wealth digital affords our citizens. Modern and efficient infrastructure is the starting point for a digitised economy.***

We need to avoid digital gaps between regions. State of the art connectivity should not stop with Europe's digital leaders or in highly populated cities but should be evenly spread to benefit all European citizens. A coordinated EU-wide cybersecure deployment of 5G, ultra-fast broadband networks and spectrum policy with licence conditions that do not distort competition is required. Progressive 5G network deployment will increase connectivity allowing greater traffic and lower latencies, paving the way also for future mobility like autonomous vehicles. Our framework should enable investment agreements, ease deployment and foster new use models.

The value of industrial data through its use and movement will become a new production factor. Fairer access through portability between businesses and voluntary data sharing should be encouraged within the confines of existing privacy frameworks. Sharing should be based on the principle "as open as possible, as closed as necessary" to allow businesses to thrive but protect ideas at the same time.

## Provide leadership

***To write the global rules-based system and enable Europe to compete globally.***

Developments in technology are increasing global connectivity and trade. This could potentially benefit Europe's digital economy and enhance opportunities in new markets for its businesses. Yet global protectionism is on the rise, regulatory cooperation is therefore needed with other likeminded regions to lower global digital trade barriers. The EU should work with the OECD and WTO to support the development of evidence-based policy to tackle barriers impacting these areas. At the same time, Europe needs to lead in the development and application of key strategic digital areas (eg. digital infrastructures, 5G, blockchain, AI and micro-electronics) in order to support Europe's industrial base.

Assessment of competition policy in the era of digitisation is necessary to find appropriate principles and tools that will stimulate and further innovation. A level playing field needs to be ensured, through an evidence-based approach, in more unknown and growing areas of importance, for example, through assessing the market definition and power of data.