

Joint press release

Lisbon, 19 March 2021

Digital Day 2021: EU countries commit to key digital initiatives for Europe's Digital Decade

Today, at the online [Digital Day 2021](#), Ministers representing EU Member States signed three Declarations to pool efforts and resources to promote **international connectivity**, incentivise the **rollout of clean digital technologies** and **improve the regulatory environment for start-ups and scale-ups**. These tangible commitments will help accelerate Europe's green and digital transformation and will contribute to the vision and goals of [Europe's Digital Decade](#).

Margrethe Vestager, Executive Vice-President for a Europe fit for the Digital Age, said: *"The new commitments made today strengthen our joint ambitions for a human-centred approach to digitalisation. With several Member states signing, the declarations consolidate commitments within three areas, namely connectivity, start-ups and clean digital technologies, supporting our ambitions towards a more competitive, inclusive and green Europe."*

Thierry Breton, Commissioner for Internal Market, said: *"The Digital Day is an important avenue for Member States to come together, around key digital goals. The new commitments that Member States made today are also evidence of our determination in the EU to work together for greater digital leadership by 2030."*

Pedro Siza Vieira, Portuguese Minister for the Economy and Digital Transition, said: *"The Portuguese Presidency of the Council aims to play a decisive role as an accelerator of the digital transition. We believe that the commitments made today by Member States will help Europe to position itself as a global digital leader, as defined in the Digital Decade Strategy."*

Hosted by the [Portuguese Presidency of the Council](#) and the European Commission, the fourth edition of the Digital Day is bringing together Members of the European Parliament, Ministers from Member States, industry executives and several other stakeholders. The participating Member States made concrete commitments in three key areas, namely connectivity, start-ups and clean digital technologies.

Connectivity: Europe to reinforce global connectivity networks through its Data gateways

27 European countries signed the Declaration on ["European Data Gateways as a key element of the EU's Digital Decade"](#), in which they committed to reinforce connectivity

between Europe and its partners in Africa, Asia, the European Neighbourhood and Latin America. The focus will be on terrestrial and submarine cables, satellites and network links for increased and secure data exchange. The EU already has strong data protection standards and high-quality internal connectivity. By improving its global connectivity networks, it can become a global, secure and agile data centre.

Startups: Startups and scale-ups to benefit from best practices

25 European countries signed the Declaration on **“EU Startup Nations Standard”**, which aims to ensure that all European start-ups and scale-ups benefit from the best practices adopted by successful startup ecosystems. To this end, the Commission, together with Member States and industrial stakeholders, has identified a number of best practices that contribute to a growth-friendly environment. These include the processing of applications for visas from third country talent; fiscal treatment of stock options; and, increasing the amount and diversity of private capital. The goal is that these practices become the general rule, central to the EU’s transition to a sustainable, digital and resilient economy.

Green digital transformation: mobilising investments in clean digital technologies

26 European countries signed the Declaration on **“A Green and Digital Transformation of the EU”** to accelerate the use of green digital technologies for the benefit of the environment. Member States will work together to speed up the deployment and development of advanced digital technologies, such as 5G and 6G, fibre optics, high-performance computing and Internet of Things, as key solutions to achieve climate neutrality and drive the green and digital transitions in priority sectors, such as energy, transport, manufacturing, agri-food and construction. Other areas of action include the promotion of green cloud, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and blockchain technologies, as well as sustainable hardware, green public procurement, support for green tech start-ups and SMEs.

In addition, 26 Chief Executive Officers from the ICT sector joined the **“European Green Digital Coalition”**, committing on behalf of their companies to significantly reduce their carbon footprint by 2030, and to become climate neutral by 2040. Solutions include investing in the development of more energy and material efficient digital technologies, working with relevant NGOs and expert organisations to measure and monitor the net environmental impact of green digital solutions and many more. Finally, they commit to co-create deployment guidelines of green digital solutions together with other industry leaders, in order to accelerate the transition to sustainability of sectors such as energy, transport, building and agriculture.

Background

The 2021 edition of the Digital Day marks the fourth anniversary of this event. The last edition in 2019 focused on [smart and sustainable agriculture](#), [digitising cultural heritage](#), as well as [encouraging women's participation in the digital and technology sectors](#). Since then these initiatives have progressed significantly:

- The Commission has set up various [large-scale pilots](#) and a network of digital innovation hubs, [SmartAgriHubs](#), to drive the digitisation of agriculture in Europe. These include [IoF2020](#), an innovative farmer-centric project promoting the uptake of IoT in agriculture, and [DEMETER](#), which enables the deployment of farmer-driven interoperable platforms.
- In the current EU long-term budget for 2021 - 2027, Europe will further strengthen its efforts through the [post-2020 CAP proposals](#), [Horizon Europe](#) and the [Digital Europe Programme](#). With initiatives such as the [testing and experimentation of artificial intelligence](#) in agriculture, the Commission will boost the adoption of digital technologies in the sector.
- The [DCHE](#) Expert Group has met [three times](#) since the launch of the initiative on digitising cultural heritage, and considerable progress has been made, particularly with regard to [3D digitisation of tangible cultural heritage](#).
- The [Women in Digital Scoreboard 2020](#) shows that the gender gap continues to narrow. In May 2019, the [MEDIA](#) sub-programme of Creative Europe launched the first edition of '[Women on the move](#)', including the publication of an [overview of good practices](#). Last year, the Commission also presented its [Gender Equality Strategy](#) for 2020-2025.

More Information

[Digital Day 2021](#)

[Digital Day 2019](#)

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