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Paris, 7 February 2022

PRESS RELEASE

BUILDING EUROPE'S DIGITAL SOVEREIGNTY CONFERENCE

DAY 1 CONCLUSIONS: EVENT PARTICIPANTS DISCUSS UNPRECEDENTED CLOUD TECHNOLOGY AND DIGITAL COMMONS INITIATIVES

The Building Europe's Digital Sovereignty conference, organised by the Ministry for the Economy, Finance and the Recovery, started today, Monday, 7 February 2022.

This first day was attended by high-level participants (European commissioners, ministers and MEPs, academics, non-profit and private sector stakeholders) who discussed the means available to Europe for bolstering its digital sovereignty.

1. The first day of the conference provided an opportunity to review a set of legislative initiatives that will be decisive for the European Union's future digital sovereignty:

- The draft Digital Services Act (DSA) which will make platforms (social media, video sharing websites and applications, marketplaces, etc.) more accountable for illicit or dangerous content
- The draft Digital Markets Act (DMA) which will help restore a level playing field between companies and curtail gatekeepers' most harmful commercial practices
- The revision of the Network and Information Systems Directive (NIS2) which will provide the EU with the resources to more effectively combat cyberattacks and strengthen European industry's cyber capabilities.

The conference thus raised awareness among the general public in Europe of the important ongoing talks on these strategic issues at European level.

2. Tangible projects to help consolidate European digital sovereignty were unveiled during this first day:

- Twelve Member States called for pre-notification to the European Commission, in spring 2022, **of an Important Project of Common European Interest (IPCEI) to underpin our investments and strategic autonomy in cloud and edge computing**, through transnational European projects (see appendix). In this respect and to take up this major challenge, up to €7bn in public and private European funding could be marshalled.
- At the same time, to make us less dependent on physical infrastructure and software developed in closed, monopoly-dominated and systemic digital ecosystems, **16 Member States signed a declaration to set up a working group to support the creation of digital commons within the EU** (see appendix). The group will

submit its operational conclusions in June 2022 before the end of the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

The conference will continue on Tuesday, 8 February and will focus on Scale-up Europe, an initiative to fast track the emergence of European tech champions.

Jean-Yves Le Drian: “This first day of the conference being held on 7 and 8 February demonstrated that Europeans have become aware of how important it is for us to achieve true digital sovereignty. As with our efforts in other areas to expand this capacity for sovereign action, the strengthening of our cybersecurity, our ability to innovate, our regulation resources and the preparation of an initiative for the digital commons, will enable us to accelerate the pace of our work in the digital sphere. In the coming weeks, the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union will strive to finalise these initiatives which are a prerequisite for our digital sovereignty.”

Bruno Le Maire: “There is no political sovereignty without technological sovereignty. We must, throughout Europe, bring about a technological awakening that guarantees control over innovations. This is what the President of the Republic is fighting for and it is a priority of the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union. This first day of the conference, punctuated by fruitful discussions, enabled real progress to be made on a number of initiatives to bolster Europe’s digital sovereignty. The signing of a Manifesto by 12 Member States, including France, calling for the launch of an IPCEI for cloud technology, is a major milestone for European innovation in this strategic tech sector. In areas such as 5G and AI, several large-scale projects led by French businesses will reap the benefits of this IPCEI. It will help consolidate our strategic autonomy through a series of transnational European projects.”

Clément Beaune: “The first day of the conference allowed a set of tangible initiatives to be discussed and launched. They will enable Europe to assert itself as a true digital power that is realistic and open to the world, and that upholds our values and the founding principles of the internet. Regulation, innovation and openness to discussions on the digital commons are central to this approach which is being led by the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union.”

Cédric O: “Today’s discussions highlighted how urgent it is to act to restore a level playing field on digital markets and to make platforms, which are too often responsible for spreading illicit and dangerous content on the internet, accountable. Digital sovereignty is largely dependent on our ability to freely determine the rules binding on us. This first day confirmed that the Council, Parliament and Commission are fully primed for the landmark digital regulation legislation which will be negotiated during the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union. But, our sovereignty is also reliant on our capacity to nurture tech leaders, and the significant involvement of Member States in the Cloud IPCEI represents a key step towards achieving this objective.”

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