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Meeting of Digital Affairs Ministers in Nevers: Member States United in Supporting Ukraine and Strengthening the EU's Telecommunications and Cybersecurity Resilience

At the informal meeting of European Ministers in charge of telecommunications and digital affairs, the Ministers reaffirmed:

The European Union's solidarity with Ukraine

As part of the ongoing talks initiated with Ukrainian Vice Prime Minister Mykhailo Fedorov on 3 March 2022, the Ministers discussed the IT and telecommunications aid to be provided to Ukraine. The primary aim is to allow government authorities to continue their work, namely through the provision of IT equipment necessary for the continued normal functioning of the Ukrainian government, and to keep the country's telecommunications services operational.

The French presidency of the Council of the European Union will coordinate the efforts between Member States.

The Ministers called on private-sector companies in a position to provide such equipment to do so, and to coordinate closely with their governments.

In line with the declarations made on 4 March 2022 by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, the Ministers also pledged to be ready, should new measures be considered.

Efforts to step up the fight against disinformation

Combatting disinformation, which is already one of the objectives of the draft Digital Services Act, is an especially pressing issue in the context of the conflict in Ukraine. Online platforms, particularly social media companies, have a decisive role to play in this area.

In a unanimously adopted political declaration, the 27 Ministers called on tech companies to take additional voluntary measures to combat online disinformation and information manipulation ([see link to declaration](#)).

The importance of increasing the resilience of Europe's telecommunications networks and cybersecurity

The Ministers noted that the telecommunications sector is one of the most advanced in terms of cyber threat preparedness, but still called on the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC) and the European Union Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA) to identify the gamut of risks threatening European communications networks and infrastructure and to formulate recommendations on how to strengthen their resilience.

The recent increase in cyber threat levels, worsened by the situation in Ukraine and the risk of cyber incidents within the EU, have led the Ministers to call for bolstering and accelerating the pace of European cooperation in the area of cybersecurity.

Discussions between participants helped to reassert the need to swiftly adopt and implement the revised Network and Information Security (NIS2) Directive, so as to guarantee a high common level of security of essential network and information systems.

The Ministers also requested that Member States' cybersecurity authorities step up their cooperation at operational level and called on the European Commission to firm up the Cyber Resilience Act announced by President von der Leyen. Additionally, they approved the creation of a cybersecurity emergency response fund.

The 27 Ministers adopted a bold political declaration intended to boost the EU's cybersecurity capabilities with details on each of these initiatives ([see link to declaration](#)).

Cédric O, Minister of State for Digital Affairs and Electronic Communications: *"The crisis we are all experiencing together means that we must move faster to realise our cybersecurity agenda and increase the overall resilience of our systems and networks. It is foundational to our sovereignty, security and strategic autonomy. The remarkable contributions of Member States, the Commission and an array of institutional stakeholders during our meeting in Nevers shows our determination to improve cybersecurity at EU level. Our discussions helped us to chart a course for further strengthening the EU's resilience in the medium term. The commitments made*

today also demonstrate the Union's ability to rapidly respond to a crisis and EU partners' solidarity towards Ukraine, including in the digital and telecommunications realms."

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