



## Toulouse Call for a Green and Digital Transition in the EU June 2022

**Alongside the international community, the European Union faces the urgency of the climate crisis. The green transition is one of the most pressing issues of the 21<sup>st</sup> century** because the climate crisis has the potential to harm all of us, in particular the lives of more than 3 billion people across the globe who are the most vulnerable. It is therefore crucial that the European Union does its part to fight the triple global crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution and avoids causing irreparable damages that it could cause to the population and ecosystems.

Since July 2021, **the European Union is legally required to accelerate its environmental transition, in order to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030 and to be climate-neutral by 2050.** These objectives were pledged in a context where accelerating the digital transition and developing digital innovation in the EU are a key part of improving **the** EU's competitiveness, strategic autonomy and sovereignty while preserving its open markets.

In 2020, the Council adopted conclusions "*Digitalisation for the benefit of the environment*", as a result of a process steered by the German presidency. In 2021, on the occasion of the Digital Days, organised by the Portuguese Presidency of the Council, 26 EU Member States signed a ministerial declaration "*A Green and Digital Transformation of the EU*". Both documents stress that **digital technologies can be used as a key enabler to reach the EU's environmental and climate targets.** However, **our digital services, infrastructures and above all our digital products also have adverse environmental impacts,** especially when their full life cycle is taken into account.

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**We, 18 Member States, shall work with the European Commission to draft a horizontal and holistic strategy including respective sectoral action plans and relevant key performance indicators to use the full potential of digital technologies in order to foster digital transformation into a lever for the environmental transition, ensure the development of green tech as well as to monitor and optimise the environmental cost of the digital sector.**

We therefore ask for the following:

**To define, before 2026, specific and appropriate objectives and measures for the digital sector, in order to help digital technologies reduce other sectors' negative impact on the environment and optimise the carbon and environmental footprint of digital technologies before 2030 and 2050.**

In order to achieve the EU Green Deal's objectives, the European Union must **build upon innovative solutions, industrial policy and public and private funding to bring out the full potential of technologies** (artificial intelligence, data spaces, digital twins, etc.) **for the environmental transition of the EU**. Existing funding programmes, such as Horizon Europe and Digital Europe, that helps to bridge the gap between digital technology research and market deployment, will play a key role in helping the development of use-cases across the European Union. Furthermore, the promotion of a strong data economy is a prerequisite for developing and utilising new technologies that can help achieve a carbon neutral and green economy in Europe. The access to and sharing of data across sectors – public and private – show potential in applying technologies such as artificial intelligence to efficiently use, reuse and recycle resources. The further development of the common European data spaces is an important tool in meeting these efforts. Moreover, security considerations will remain central in the efforts to make use of digital technologies in support of the green and digital transition.

Achieving the objectives of the Green Deal and meeting the dual challenge of the environmental and digital transition will have to be accompanied by an improvement in the qualifications and skills of all Europeans (citizens, workers, students, job seekers, etc.) as well as support for lifelong learning incorporating these themes.

**To evaluate the net environmental impact of the digital sector** in order to address the twin transition and to orient companies, public organisations and European citizens towards sustainable options, **by:**

- Developing a **pan-European methodology to evaluate the environmental impact of the digital sector**. Such effort should be built upon existing projects (such as the European Green Digital Coalition) or upcoming work to be undertaken (for instance, the objective stated in the Body of European Regulators of Electronic Communications [BEREC]'s report on the environmental footprint of the digital sector);
- **Putting more emphasis on supporting cooperation in data collection and evaluation, and the allocation of resources for research, development and innovation to facilitate the take-up of digital technologies in more energy-intensive sectors.**
- **Strongly encouraging both hardware and software manufacturers to provide greater transparency regarding the environmental and carbon footprint of their products throughout their full life cycle and supply chains, and particularly for their production phase including with a view to the extraction and processing of natural resources.**

In the current geopolitical landscape, to **consider a holistic approach when drafting the strategy in order to reduce the EU's strategic dependencies and achieve sovereignty, by:**

- **Assessing dependencies of the digital sector in Europe**, in order to plan for security of supply, through diversification and reduction and prevent dependence on foreign actors, notably in terms of access to energy, raw materials and electronic components including examining the potential of the circular economy in Europe;
- Reaffirming the need for the development of a European semi-conductors ecosystem, through the European Chips Act, in order to achieve 20 % of the global market share by 2030;
- Since the stakes are global and not limited to the EU member states, **discuss with relevant stakeholders** (within bilateral dialogues such as the EU-US Trade and Technology Council [TTC] **and in close cooperation with the industry**) **or in international fora** (for instance, in the International Telecommunications Union [ITU] **or in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD]**), **or with relevant research and academia stakeholders**), the elaboration of **methodologies and the sharing of best practices and codes of conducts**;
- **Strengthening and promoting the EU's role as a global standard setter in regulatory fields relevant to digital technologies.**

**To address the environmental impact of digital infrastructures and services across the digital value chain, by:**

- **Reaffirming the objective of climate neutrality for data centres by 2030** that was set in the communication “Shaping Europe’s Digital Future” **and in the Communication “2030 Digital Compass: the European way for the Digital Decade**, through additional measures, for example in the Energy Efficiency Directive [EED], self-regulatory codes of conduct and the climate neutral data centre pact;
- **Incentivising the production of low-energy or more energy-efficient processors** for High Performance Computing, artificial intelligence or other applications, for instance through the European Processor Initiative [EPI];
- **Facilitating the deployment of more efficient and sustainable networks and infrastructures** in 5G and future telecom and broadcast evolutions;
- **Incentivising the development of green tech by design**, such as the creation of a seal for green tech by design products or digital services as a way to develop a competitive edge for European industry or to make software, AI and other applications greener in the EU, for example with the launch of initiatives to develop green coding practices and sustainable design;
- **Strengthening certification systems for sustainable raw materials and supporting measures that increase the recyclability of electronic products, and foster the European secondary raw materials markets.**

Ultimately, because their production phase can represent up to 75 % of the digital industry's carbon and environmental footprint, **to adopt specific measures for digital equipment and products (such as television screens, laptops, smartphones, connected objects, etc.), by:**

- **Facilitating the implementation of the amended radio equipment directive, now establishing a single and common charger solution for electronic devices in the EU,** in order to save up to 10 000 tons of electronic waste every year;
- **Fostering the development of more sustainable and long-lasting, equipment and products, for example by improving reparability,** and by setting minimum requirements to products through eco-design and energy-efficient solutions;
- **Fighting software and planned hardware obsolescence in order to increase the lifespan of digital equipment and products,** by strengthening transparency measures as well as the **EU's repair, circular and refurbishment sector supporting the transition to a circular economy.** In addition, it will contribute to the reduction of our dependencies, as most digital devices are produced outside of the EU and that only 40 % of electronic devices are currently being recycled within the EU.

**We are confident that developing such a strategy will help the EU to position itself at the forefront of the fight against climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution on the world scene.**

**We furthermore believe that this strategy will offer EU companies opportunities to develop digital tools and solutions with positive environmental impacts on a widely acknowledged scientific basis, thus substantiating their climate claims and guiding them to become leaders in a promising new economy.**

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18 Member States signed the declaration so far. The final version with signatures will soon be published.