

# Path to the digital decade programme

## OVERVIEW

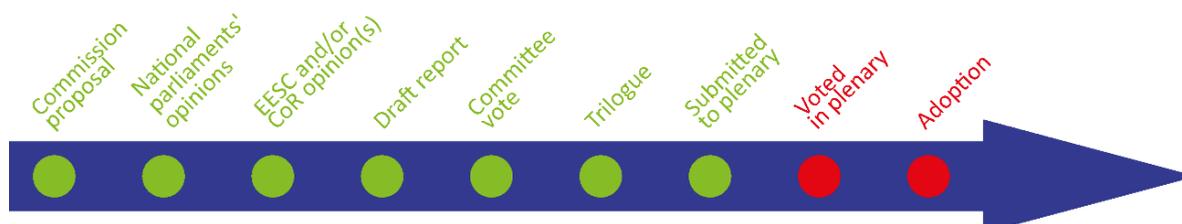
In its digital decade strategy, the European Commission has put forward its vision for new strategic digital objectives for 2030. These should prepare Europe for the roll-out of the next generation of broadband infrastructure with gigabit speeds, including 5G, and for the digital transformation of the public and private sectors, while also reducing the digital divide. To measure progress towards the digital decade, the Commission is proposing a 'digital compass', with indicators based on four dimensions: improved digital skills, secure and sustainable digital infrastructures, digital transformation of businesses, and digitalisation of the public sector.

The decision will establish the 'Path to the Digital Decade' policy programme, which aims to set up a governance framework and funding to help achieve the 2030 digital decade targets, including multi-country projects and cooperation mechanisms between the Commission and Member States.

At the European Parliament, the file has been allocated to the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, which adopted its report on 17 May 2022 and also agreed to enter into trilogue negotiations. An agreement was reached during the second trilogue on 13 July 2022, and this was endorsed by the ITRE committee on 1 September 2022. Parliament is expected to vote on this agreement during its November II 2022 plenary session.

### Proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the 2030 policy programme 'Path to the Digital Decade'

<i>Committee responsible:</i>	Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE)	COM(2021) 574 15.9.2021
<i>Rapporteur:</i>	Martina Dlabajová (Renew, Czechia)	2021/0293(COD)
<i>Shadow rapporteurs:</i>	Ivan Štefanec (EPP, Slovakia) Josianne Cutajar (S&D, Malta) Jordi Solé (Greens/EFA, Spain) Elena Lizzi (ID, Italy) Jessica Stegrud (ECR, Sweden) Marisa Matias (The Left, Portugal)	Ordinary legislative procedure (COD) (Parliament and Council on equal footing – formerly 'co-decision')
<i>Next phase:</i>	Vote in plenary	



## Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated the use of digital tools, demonstrating the opportunities they offer while exposing society's vulnerability to new digital divides. It has also [highlighted](#) the European Union's dependency on non-EU digital players and platforms. Given its economic and societal importance, the EU aims to reinforce its digital sovereignty to ensure strategic autonomy, while also promoting common EU values and respecting fundamental freedoms, including data protection and privacy.

Thus, the EU is speeding up the digital transformation and has put forward a number of instruments to support this. For instance, a booming mobile application market, ever-increasing end-user mobile connectivity and the increasing range of connected objects require the expansion of network bandwidth capacity and speed. The EU aims to roll out ubiquitous, very high capacity networks, and more specifically 5G, to boost Europe's global competitiveness and further the digitalisation of European industry, which still [lags behind](#), particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

According to [industry](#), Europe today is being outpaced in many areas of digitalisation, and there is a risk that European companies and citizens will be left behind. Concerns have been raised that not all consumers and businesses in Europe will benefit from the digital transformation, given the current and future digital divide between urban and rural areas and across EU countries. Moreover, given the current economic climate, the high level of investment needed to achieve the digital transformation might prove difficult to raise.

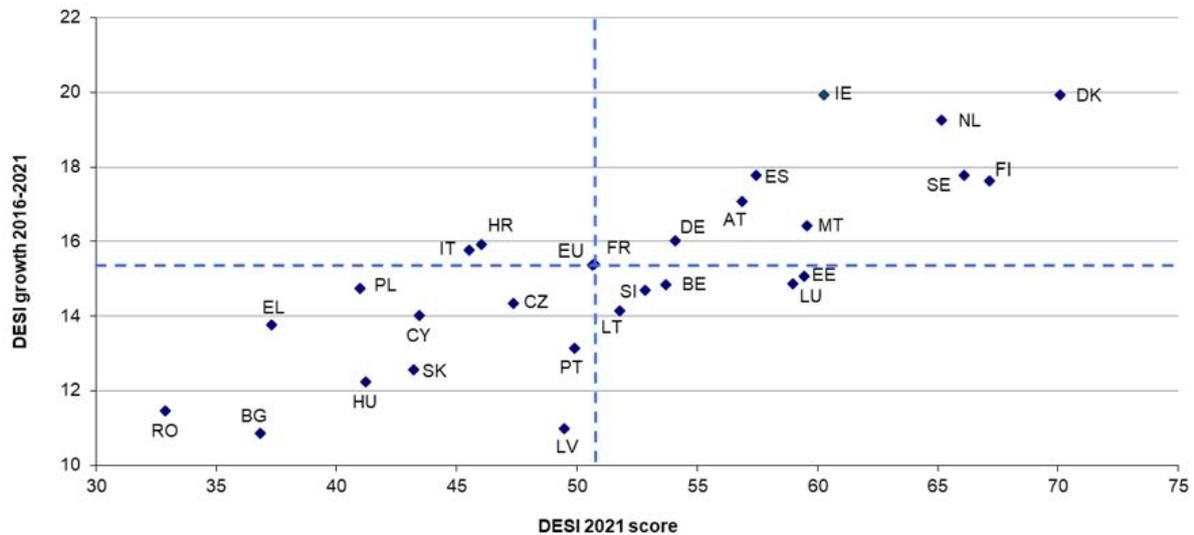
## Existing situation

In 2000, at the time of the [Lisbon Agenda](#), the European Council set the goal of making the EU the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world by 2010. Since then, the Commission has put forward consecutive digital strategies<sup>1</sup> to improve the deployment of internet infrastructure, the deployment and use of digital public and private services, and the establishment of the EU digital single market (DSM).

All these strategies included a number of benchmarking and monitoring targets and indicators to monitor progress in achieving the goals of the respective strategies. Hence, [since 2005](#) Eurostat [has been collecting](#) statistics on the information society in the EU, through the Community ICT household and enterprises surveys, to feed these monitoring exercises. In addition, the Commission has been commissioning ad hoc studies to collect additional data needed to feed the analysis, such as the [digital agenda scoreboards](#) and the current annual Digital Economy and Society Index ([DESI](#)), which measure progress towards the EU digital transformation. The DESI index is expected to be enhanced and used under the digital decade programme.

According to the latest DESI exercise, Denmark, Finland, Sweden and the Netherlands have the most advanced digital economies in the EU, followed by Ireland, Malta and Estonia. Romania, Bulgaria and Greece have the lowest DESI scores.

Figure 1 – Digital Economy and Society Index – Member States' progress, 2016-2021



Source: European Commission, 2021.

On 9 March 2021, the European Commission presented its latest vision for Europe's digital transformation by 2030. Its communication on the '[2030 Digital Compass: the European way for the Digital Decade](#)' announced an update of the Commission's overall digital strategy from February 2020 and of its gigabyte society targets, set in 2020 and 2016 respectively. This new strategy has been put forward to address a number of digital vulnerabilities revealed by the coronavirus crisis, such as dependency on non-European technologies. Europe should fund and support the development of sectors that are crucial to its digital sovereignty, such as semiconductors and edge computing. Concretely the Commission has identified four main areas for action:

- 1 achieve a digitally skilled population and highly-skilled digital professionals;
- 2 implement secure and performant sustainable digital infrastructures;
- 3 achieve the digital transformation of businesses;
- 4 achieve the digitalisation of public services.

The focus is increasingly on actions where the EU can bring specific added value, concentrating on European digital projects whose scope and scale cannot be realised by individual countries alone. That is the case, for instance, in the areas identified under the [Digital Europe programme](#) (for 2021-2027) – the first ever funding programme dedicated to supporting digital transformation in the EU, with a budget of €7.5 billion. Other EU programmes will also play a major role in funding digital infrastructure, including the [Connecting Europe Facility](#) and [cohesion policy instruments](#). Furthermore, at least 20% of the EU [Recovery and Resilience Facility \(RRF\) funds](#) received by each EU country should be dedicated to the digital transition. The latest DESI country reports include a summary overview of the digital investments and reforms in the Recovery and Resilience Plans (RRPs) for the 22 plans that had been approved by the Commission at the time. Generally, the EU Member States have committed to spending at least 20% of their national endowments from the RRF on digital. Many Member States are meeting or exceeding this target.

According to a Deloitte [report](#) commissioned by Vodafone, digital expenditure across Member States already amounts to 26% of the RRF funding linked to RRFs (around €130 billion).<sup>2</sup> Many Member States with lower DESI scores have allocated some of the highest digital funding per capita, which might reflect a recognition of the need for further investment to support the digital transformation and the digital decade targets.

As mentioned in the digital decade strategy, the [digital compass tool](#) will provide the monitoring and governance mechanism to track the digital decade's four goals, including key performance indicators (KPIs). These 2030 connectivity targets build on the 2020-2025 targets<sup>3</sup> already laid out in

the [Gigabit Society](#) and [5G action plan](#) communications, both from 2016. In setting the new targets, the Commission argues that, at the current pace of network development, it would be impossible to satisfy increasing user demand.

Finally, the Commission has also proposed to include a set of digital principles and rights in an interinstitutional declaration, which could be adopted by the Commission, the European Parliament and the Council later in 2022. The Commission's [proposal](#) is currently being discussed in the Parliament and the Council and will serve as an overarching reference framework for digital transformation.

## Parliament's starting position

On 10 October 2021, the European Parliament adopted a [resolution](#) on Europe's media in the digital decade. The Parliament called for increased support for the news media and audiovisual sectors, and for the cultural and creative sectors more generally, with a particular focus on SMEs.

On 10 June 2021, the European Parliament adopted a [resolution](#) on the EU's cybersecurity strategy for the digital decade. The Parliament called for EU-funded digitisation projects to include cybersecurity requirements. It welcomed support for research and innovation, especially in disruptive technologies (such as quantum computing and quantum cryptography), and called for further research into post-quantum algorithms as a standard for cybersecurity.

In its [resolution](#) of March 2018 on guidelines for the 2019 budget, the Parliament stressed the potential for economic growth stemming from technological transformation and called for the EU budget to have an appropriate role in supporting the digitalisation of European industry and the promotion of digital skills and entrepreneurship. In particular, the Parliament called for the promotion of and support to female entrepreneurs.

In its [resolution](#) of 1 June 2017 on 'Internet connectivity for growth, competitiveness and cohesion: European gigabit society and 5G', the Parliament welcomed the connectivity targets. It also called on the Commission to tackle the digital divide and frame a coherent timetable and 5G financing strategy in line with the European Electronic Communications Code (EECC). It also called for an investment-friendly regulatory environment, a coherent European spectrum strategy and acceleration of the EU's 5G standardisation efforts. Emphasising the positive impact that 5G could have on European society in terms of education, health, culture, cohesion and employment, the Parliament called for the development and improvement of digital skills, and asked the Commission to produce an annual 5G action plan review to report on progress made and to make recommendations.

## Council and European Council starting position

The [European Council meeting of 25 March 2021](#) stressed the need to enhance the EU's digital sovereignty and for the Council to swiftly examine the Commission's communication on the 2030 digital compass with a view to preparing the related digital policy programme. It identified the digital compass communication as a step towards mapping Europe's digital development for the next decade, and called on the Commission to use all available instruments in the field of industrial, trade and competition policy.

On 22 November 2021, the Council prepared [a progress report](#) on the proposal for a decision establishing the 2030 policy programme 'Path to the digital decade'. The Commission reminded Member States of the importance of finalising the adoption of the file if possible in the first half of 2022, to enable a first annual monitoring cycle as well as the first European Digital Infrastructure Consortium (EDIC) by 2023.

## Preparation of the proposal

The Commission did not perform an impact assessment to accompany this proposal, but it did different types of stakeholder consultations, such as public consultations and a dedicated two-day online event, co-organised by the Commission and the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the EU on 1-2 June 2021. The Commission also created the [Futurium](#) online community platform to get feedback from stakeholders on digital issues throughout the digital decade. This community is divided into subgroups that reflect the different elements outlined in the communication '2030 Digital Compass: the European way for the Digital Decade'.

In addition, the Commission organised a [targeted consultation](#) on the '2030 Digital Compass: the European way for the Digital Decade' that ran from 22 June to 3 August 2021, and an online [public consultation](#) on digital rights that took place from 12 May to 6 September 2021. Moreover, there was a consultation on the [roadmap](#) for the digital compass policy programme, open from 24 June to 22 July 2021.

The Commission raised awareness of the targeted public consultation through several outreach activities, including email invitations to policy stakeholders, features on the homepage of the digital strategy website and in the Commission's weekly 'Shaping Europe's digital future' newsletter, as well as posts on social media channels and on Futurium. In total, 101 contributions were received.

During the public consultation, the majority of respondents stated that there is a need to increase investment in fast-speed infrastructure and to implement the EECC in all Member States<sup>4</sup> to allow for more investment. Respondents also highlighted that, in the longer term, it needs to be considered where investment should be targeted, recognising that economic activity might not return to pre-crisis levels for years to come. They also emphasised that collaborative action between governments and other sectors is crucial to achieve the 2030 targets and to meet the 2030 environmental commitments. Furthermore, respondents highlighted the following areas as being relevant for achieving the 2030 targets: recognising the benefits of Wi-Fi to achieve 2030 connectivity goals; addressing gender-based discrimination; shaping global regulatory standards together around key emerging technologies; building strong international partnerships; and investing in digitally enabled and inclusive services.

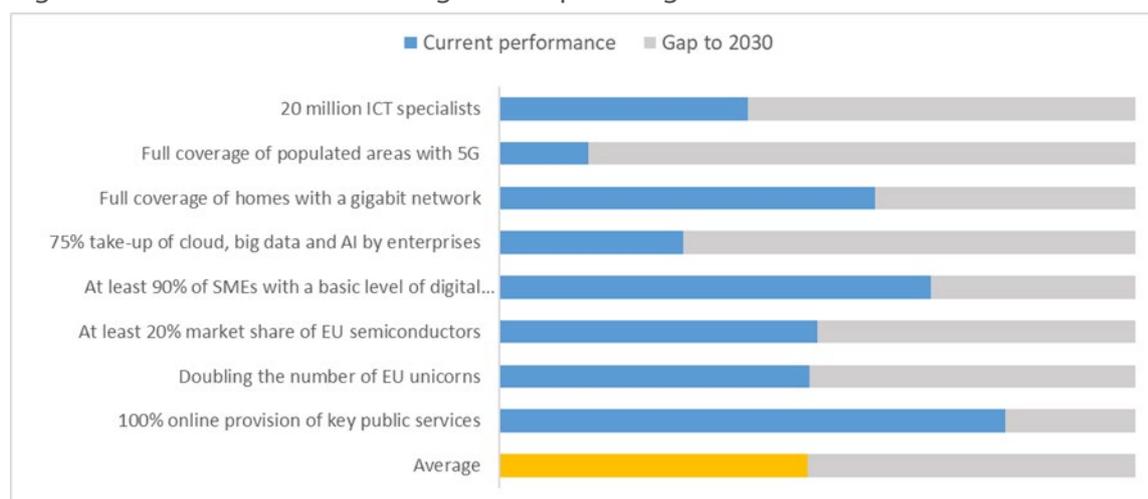
In addition, the Commission received 609 replies to the [public consultation](#) on the declaration of digital rights in the digital decade, which ran between 12 May and 6 September 2021. A large majority of respondents found the following aspects to be important for achieving the 2030 targets: (1) that everyone has access to universal broadband at an affordable price; (2) that digital products and services have the lowest possible environmental impact; (3) to have human-centric algorithms; (4) to have digital education and skills for everyone; (5) to have accessible online public services at all levels; (6) to have secure access to one's own electronic health records; (7) to have a European digital identity that can be used anywhere; (8) to provide a secure and trusted online environment; and (9) to provide children and young people with the right digital competences to navigate the online environment safely and responsibly.

## The changes the proposal would bring

The proposed decision would establish the 'Path to the digital decade' policy programme, which aims to set up a governance framework and funding to help achieve the 2030 digital decade targets, including multi-country projects and cooperation mechanisms between the Commission and the Member States.

The digital decade targets would not be binding either at EU or at national level, while the cooperation mechanism will be binding to ensure the achievement of objectives and targets by 2030. Much progress remains to be made to achieve some of these targets (see Figure 2).

Figure 2 – EU current level vs. digital compass targets for 2030



Source: European Commission, 2021.

Each of the four cardinal points of the digital compass relates to one of the four digital decade goals. They are spelt out in clear objectives and KPIs, which the Commission proposes should be achieved by 2030:

### 1. A digitally skilled population and highly skilled digital professionals:

- At least 80 % of all adults should have basic digital skills by 2030. This indicator follows the [European Pillar of Social Rights action plan](#).
- Reach 20 million employed information and communication technology (ICT) specialists in the EU, with convergence between women and men, compared to 7.8 million in 2019 (see Figure 2). Currently, [more than 70 %](#) of businesses report a lack of staff with adequate digital skills as an obstacle to investment. There is also a severe [gender imbalance](#), with only one in six ICT specialists and one in three science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) graduates being women.

### 2. Secure and performant sustainable digital infrastructures:

- By 2030, all European households should be covered by 5G, as well as by a fixed gigabit network. All European households should have gigabit connectivity (compared to 59 % in 2020) and all populated areas should be covered by 5G (up from 14 % in 2021) (see Figure 2). High performance computing (HPC) will require terabit connections to allow real-time data processing.
- The production of cutting-edge and sustainable semiconductors in Europe, including processors, should represent at least 20 % of world production in value, doubling from 10 % in 2020 (see Figure 2).
- 10 000 climate-neutral, highly secure [edge nodes](#) should be deployed in the EU and distributed in a way that guarantees access to data with low latency (i.e. a few milliseconds), wherever businesses are located.
- The [quantum revolution](#) in the next decade will be a game-changer in the emergence and use of digital technologies. By 2025, Europe should have its first computer with quantum acceleration, paving the way for Europe to be at the cutting edge of quantum capabilities by 2030.

### 3. Digital transformation of businesses:

- The transformation of businesses will depend on their ability to adopt new digital technologies rapidly and across the board, including in industrial and services ecosystems that are lagging behind. Three out of four companies should use cloud computing services, big data and artificial intelligence by 2030.

- More than 90 % of European SMEs should reach at least a basic level of digital intensity,<sup>5</sup> compared to 61 % in 2019 (see Figure 2).
- The creation of around 250 unicorns<sup>6</sup> (start-ups valued at US\$1 billion) should be supported in the EU, a 100 % increase compared to 2021 (see Figure 2).

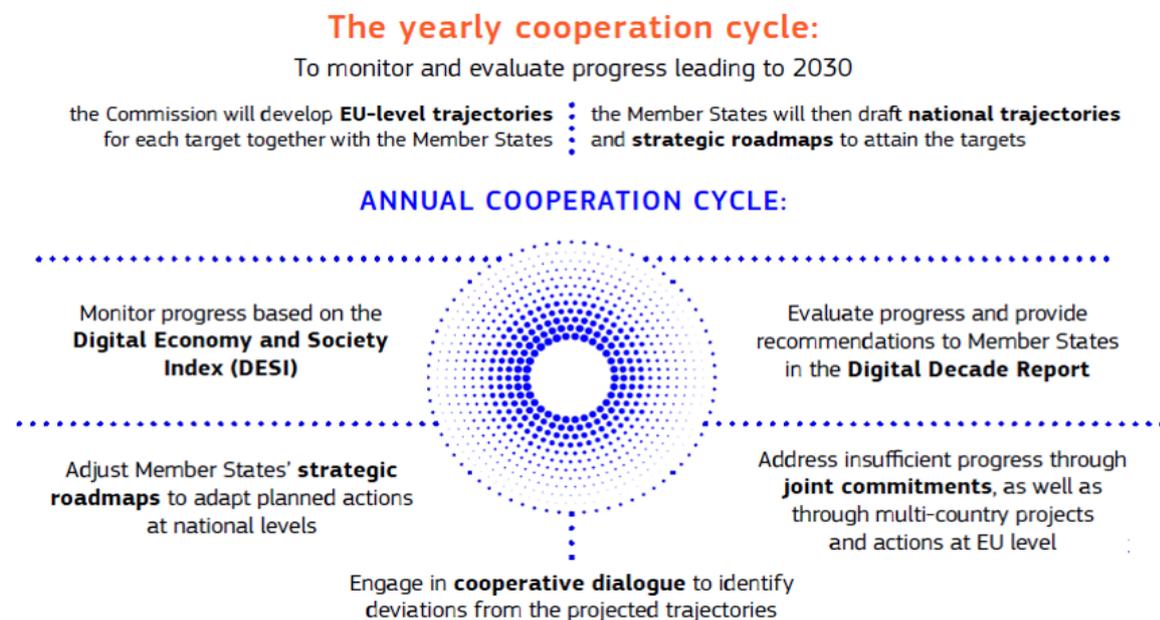
4. Digitalisation of public services:

- All key public services should be available online (see Figure 2).
- All citizens will have access to their e-medical records.
- 80 % of citizens should use a digital identity (ID) solution.

In terms of digitalisation of public services, it is expected that (should the framework for a [European Digital Identity](#), put forward on 3 June 2021, be approved) 80% of citizens could be using an e-ID solution by 2030. In terms of digitally enabled health solutions, the coronavirus pandemic has seen [an increase](#) in telemedicine, remote care and robotics solutions for protecting medical staff and helping patients remotely cared for at their home, although the use of digital medical records remains low and with many divergences across countries, whereas the target is for them to be used by 100 % of citizens.

Following the entry into force of the digital decade policy programme, it is expected that, within six months, Member States would propose strategic national roadmaps to pursue the digital targets at national level and, within one year, that the Commission would publish the first report on the state of the digital decade (see Figure 3 below).

Figure 3 – EU governance and implementation framework for the policy programme



Source: European Commission, 2021.

The Commission would first develop projected EU trajectories for each target, to track progress towards the targets. In turn, the Member States would define national projected trajectories, where possible, and propose national strategic roadmaps, outlining their plans to attain them. Progress along EU and national trajectories would be assessed yearly in the 'European state of the digital decade report', which would be presented to both the Council and the Parliament. The current DESI index would be enhanced to keep track of Member States' progress and increase oversight.

The report would raise awareness of difficulties in achieving the goals and digital principles of the declaration, and would identify investment gaps. It will also feed into the [European Semester exercise](#), and will be aligned with the RRF process. It could include recommendations on regulatory implementation or the need for public intervention to foster additional investment in digital technologies and capacities. By 2026, the Commission would review the digital decade targets.

The Commission has set up some mechanisms, like Futurium, to enable it to engage with Member States through close cooperation and coordination, with the objective of taking joint commitments as well as possible measures at EU and national level and taking account of the implementation of other digital policies and initiatives.

Moreover, the policy programme should allow the Commission to engage with Member States to launch and shape large-scale multi-country projects.<sup>7</sup> They would channel coordinated investments between the EU, at least three Member States and, where appropriate, other public or private stakeholders in order to scale up and better target investments in strategic technological areas. To set-up a multi-country project, where there is no other legal instrument, the policy programme envisages a new legal structure, the European Digital Infrastructure Consortium (EDIC). A minimum of three Member States wishing to go ahead with a multi-country project, and who want to use an EDIC to do so, would submit an application to the Commission.

Following the examination of the Member States' application, the Commission will, if it concludes that all requirements provided for in the decision are satisfied, adopt a decision establishing the EDIC. Each consortium will have its own legal personality, governing body, statutes, and seat in a participating Member State.

## Advisory committees

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) adopted [an opinion](#) on the proposal during its 10-20 January 2022 plenary session (rapporteur: Violeta Jelić, Employers Group, Croatia). It urges the EU to develop its digital sovereignty and stresses the need for the digital transformation to take place in a sustainable, human-centred and inclusive way. It deems it crucial to guarantee the involvement of civil society representatives in shaping and implementing the policy programme. It asks to pay specific attention to the digital divide and vulnerable groups, and highlights the importance of investment in digital infrastructure and the development of the single market in data. The EESC also stresses the digitalisation of public services and considers multi-country projects to be a valuable initiative for the EU.

The European Committee of the Regions (CoR) has not prepared an opinion on the proposal.

## National parliaments

The proposal was open to [review](#) by the national parliaments of Member States. No deadline was given for the submission of reasoned opinions, on grounds of subsidiarity, and only 12 Member States did the scrutiny or are still in the process of doing so. So far, no reasoned opinions have been submitted. However, Romania, Italy and France initiated political dialogue. On 23 March 2022, the Italian Chamber of Deputies gave a favourable opinion on the proposal but made some remarks. For instance, the Chamber wonders what the link will be between the decision and the macroeconomic surveillance procedure introduced in connection with the European Semester and the monitoring of the digital decade roadmaps. The Chamber also believes an assessment needs to be made regarding the scope of the powers that the new system assigns to the Commission.

## Stakeholder views<sup>8</sup>

Stakeholders' reactions have concurred on most issues, such as improving coordination and targeting investments. Below we include a selection of these reactions.

[The Open Future Foundation](#) welcomes the digital decade policy programme and agrees that coordination between different actors, and between the EU and its Member States, is key to the success of the European digital decade, though with a stronger presence of civil society and the non-profit sector, which is needed for the programme to succeed.

[The European Data Centre Association \(EUDCA\)](#) thinks that this ambition level should also include data centre services, such as colocation.

The digital SMEs alliance [believes](#) that the digitalisation of SMEs is not only about adopting the use of digital tools, but also supporting SMEs in embracing the future and helping them to reinvent their business models in order to generate value through digital technologies.

[The European Network of Social Integration Enterprises \(ENSIE\)](#) welcomes the initiative, but calls on the European institutions to ensure inclusive digital transition, by committing to improving accessibility and digital inclusion for disadvantaged groups in all areas of public and private life, with a specific focus on work integration.

Similarly, the [European Disability Forum \(EDF\)](#) welcomes the initiative and, among other things, asks to ensure that all public funding incorporates accessibility as a funding criterion and that targeted funding is provided to projects aiming to improve accessibility for persons with disabilities.

The better internet for kids programme (BIKS) published a [report](#) emphasising that, aside from more media literacy education, better monitoring and enforcement of existing rules in the digital environment is necessary, with stricter penalties for those who misbehave online (such as those who harass, bully, or spread harmful content).

The European Telecom Network Organisation (ETNO) [believes](#), among other things, that there is a need to focus on improving the 'demand-side' dimensions of DESI, including human capital, use of internet services, integration of digital technology by enterprises and digital public services. Moreover, ETNO welcomes the possibility for the Commission to provide guidance on spectrum-related policies and measures to meet the general objectives and targets of the digital decade.

The [GSMA](#) mobile association emphasises that there remains a great disparity across and within the EU Member States between the digitally skilled citizens and the others. The GSMA considers that 80 % as a target for basic skills is not ambitious enough. In fact, that target, according to Eurostat, only [considers](#) a very basic use of the internet.

Telecom operator Telefonica [highlights](#), among other things, that the EU faces an investment gap for digital infrastructure, even to achieve its 2025 targets, particularly for 5G.

Telecom operator Orange [supports](#) the newly defined targets, as they reflect its ambitious strategy of investment in digital infrastructure, but warns that reaching those targets calls for an ambitious review of the way the current regulatory framework is implemented, in particular the way it appropriately rewards investments.

[Free Knowledge Advocacy Group EU](#) sees difficulties in the programme's implementation. For instance, in the case of the digital compass and its scope, including coordination, it will be especially challenging to implement. Both the Digital Services Act (DSA) and the Digital Markets Act (DMA) envisage the creation of various advisory and monitoring structures that will gather representatives of an array of bodies from the Member States (governmental and regulatory alike); some of these structures will have overlapping roles. This set-up may provide a challenging environment to effective and timely coordination, mainstreaming of approaches and creation of joint best practices or standards.

[Huawei Technologies](#) considers that it is of paramount importance to achieve consistent application between green and digital transition objectives, EECC, BEREC guidelines, EU State aid law and EU competition law in relation to very high capacity networks and their appraisal under different regulatory frameworks. Huawei Technologies asks for the adoption of clear guidelines on 5G network sharing to avoid fragmentation. They also believe that commitments undertaken by Member States must be legally binding and enforceable before national and European courts. Lastly, Huawei Technologies thinks it is necessary to adapt the indicators as digital technologies develop and targets change;<sup>9</sup> they suggest that the Commission aligns the DESI indicators more closely with the targets announced in the digital compass, taking into account current and emerging technology use.

## Legislative process

In the European Parliament, consideration of the Commission's [proposal for a decision](#) to establish the 2030 policy programme 'Path to the Digital Decade' [has been assigned](#) to the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) (rapporteur: Martina Dlabajová, Renew, Czechia). The rapporteur published her [draft report](#) on 3 March 2022, and it was discussed at the ITRE committee meeting of 22 March 2022. The deadline for amendments was 25 March 2022. The committees on Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO), Culture and Education (CULT) and Employment and Social Affairs (EMPL) each provided an opinion.

The report [was adopted](#) in the ITRE committee by 74 votes to one, with one abstention. The committee also agreed to enter into negotiations with the Council, the mandate for which was endorsed by Parliament during the June plenary session.

The report seeks more coherence and complementarity with existing reporting exercises, while maximising synergies across related funding instruments.<sup>10</sup> Due to the nature of the actions proposed to achieve the digital targets, planning and reporting under the digital decade policy programme will build on existing strategies, in particular on the European Semester, the Small Business Act, and the updated industrial and SME European strategies.

Member States will need to intensify their efforts to adapt their education and training systems so as to increase considerably the level of citizens' digital skills, in particular to increase the share of the active population counting on advanced digital skills.

Four elements have been identified by the rapporteur as success drivers of the EU digital roadmap to 2030 and streamlined across the text:

- **Ensuring a balanced approach, openness and security:** in this respect, the aim of pursuing digital open strategic autonomy is more suitable than that of digital sovereignty.
- **Involving SMEs and more flexibility for companies:** steering both the Commission and the Member States to concretely involve SMEs in the policy cycle, and a more flexible approach that fosters the take-up of artificial intelligence, big data and the cloud, in line with the activities and size of each company.
- **Safe and robust connectivity and a technology-neutral approach:** better reflecting the territorial dimension of the envisaged areas of intervention. The report takes a technology-neutral stance towards the deployment of the gigabit capacity network, as all forefront technologies will contribute and upcoming ones might develop at a faster pace than we can predict today.
- **A stronger role for Parliament in governance and in defining indicators:** the Parliament shall be better informed, as co-legislator, along the reporting cycle and shall be fully involved in drafting the KPIs that will serve as the basis to quantitatively assess the roadmaps and their implementation. Thus, the report also calls for a delegated act and not an implementing act.

The report also asks for the forthcoming digital decade's declaration of digital principles to be fully considered and promoted along with the programme's implementation.

The Council [adopted](#) its negotiating position on 12 May 2022. The Council's text is fully in line with the Commission proposal and underlines the importance of fundamental rights. It supports the initiative but increases the ambition of some targets and includes some modifications, such as a biannual rather than an annual cycle of cooperation in the governance framework with Member States, while maintaining the annual frequency of the 'State of the Digital Decade' report. In this regard, a stronger link with the legal basis of the decision has been established.

Interinstitutional negotiations started on 23 June 2022. A [provisional agreement](#) was reached during the second trilogue, on 13 July 2022, and it was endorsed by the ITRE committee at its [meeting](#) on 1 September 2022, by 64 votes in favour to 1 against.

The provisional agreement clarifies several definitions of the programme's general objectives, with an emphasis on strengthening fundamental rights, transparency and security, and on promoting digital skills. The Commission will develop EU-level trajectories for each of the EU's digital targets together with the Member States. The latter will draft national trajectories and strategic roadmaps to attain these targets until their expected review in 2026. The concept of multi-country projects is also better clarified in the text.

During negotiations, MEPs ensured that the European Parliament can play a strong scrutiny role in the process of achieving the digital targets by 2030. In addition, the regional dimension of the proposal was strengthened thanks to the Parliament's negotiators and a stronger focus on digital gaps and SMEs' needs.

The informal agreement will now have to be approved by both the Parliament and Council to come into force. Parliament is expected to vote on the text during its November II 2022 plenary session.

## EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT SUPPORTING ANALYSIS

Negreiro M., [The EU digital decade: A new set of digital targets for 2030](#), EPRS, European Parliament, September 2021.

Car P., [European declaration on digital rights and principles](#), EPRS, European Parliament, June 2022.

## OTHER SOURCES

[2030 policy programme 'Path to the Digital Decade'](#), Legislative Observatory (OEL), European Parliament.

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Among others: [eEurope 2002 plans](#); [eEurope 2005](#); [i2010 strategy](#); [digital decade strategy](#); [DSM strategy](#).
- <sup>2</sup> Concretely, 21 Member States had started receiving funds for their approved RRP as of 11 March 2022.
- <sup>3</sup> There are three specific connectivity targets for 2025: (1) all socio-economic drivers, such as schools, transport hubs and main providers of public services, as well as digitally intensive enterprises, should have access to internet download/upload speeds of 1 gigabit of data per second (Gbps); (2) all European households, rural or urban, should have access to connectivity offering a download speed of at least 100 megabits per second (Mbps), which can be upgraded to gigabit speed; (3) start-ups using AI and cloud computing should comprise at least 30 % of the total.
- <sup>4</sup> The EECC was not transposed by its deadline by [19 Member States](#).
- <sup>5</sup> The Digital Intensity Index (DII) measures the use of different digital technologies at enterprise level. The DII score (0-12) of an enterprise is determined by how many of the selected digital technologies it uses. A basic level of digital intensity corresponds to a situation where an enterprise scores four or more.
- <sup>6</sup> By 'unicorns', the Commission understands both: 1) realised unicorns, i.e. companies founded after 1990 that have had an IPO or trade sale above US\$1 billion; and 2) unrealised unicorns, i.e. companies that have been valued at or over US\$1 billion in their last private venture funding round (meaning the valuation has not been confirmed in a secondary transaction).
- <sup>7</sup> Multi-country projects are large-scale projects that can help to achieve the digital decade targets. The Commission expects that they will allow Member States to come together and pool resources to build digital capacities that they would not be able to develop on their own. The Commission has identified an initial list of multi-country projects, including areas such as data infrastructure, low-power processors, 5G communication, high-performance computing, secure quantum communication, public administration, blockchain, digital innovation hubs and digital skills.
- <sup>8</sup> This section aims to provide a flavour of the debate and is not intended to be an exhaustive account of all different views on the proposal. Additional information can be found in related publications listed under 'European Parliament supporting analysis'.
- <sup>9</sup> For instance, they already suggest that omission of Fixed Wireless Access in the selection of broadband access technologies capable of at least 100 Mbps in the Commission's study report SMART 2019/0020, delivering part of the indicator '1a2 At least 100 Mbps fixed broadband take-up', was surprising.
- <sup>10</sup> For instance, Digital Europe, Horizon Europe, the Connecting Europe Facility, InvestEU, cohesion funds, the single market, and the Recovery and Resilience Facility.

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