

CEOs Statement on the Purpose of Digital Networks

Europeans deserve a digital economy that delivers for all, by creating new opportunities of inclusive growth and societal improvement across European regions and across all sectors of society. We believe that the ultimate purpose of the new and existing digital networks is to enable such opportunities.

The extensive utilisation of next generation digital infrastructure, as well as the development of new digital services underpinned by such infrastructure, will be fundamental for achieving Europe's ambitious socio-economic goals, as set out in the agenda of President Ursula von der Leyen. Faster, more responsive, more intelligent and higher capacity connectivity with 5G, fibre and other gigabit networks will enable a more sustainable growth through a fresh wave of digital services and data-driven innovation. In our endeavour, we are motivated by European values and we want our services to enable European citizens.

A shared commitment of all industrial, societal and political actors to this vision is essential to:

- **Empower communities** through access to ultrafast, convergent and inclusive digital infrastructure and services;
- **Enable Europe's industrial sectors** to increase productivity, innovation and build a competitive advantage based on reliable, customised, AI-boosted and secure digital networks and services;
- **Increase environmental sustainability** and create the basis for a European Green Deal, with the ambition of achieving carbon neutrality for our sector and of helping traditional industries reduce their climate footprint through the uptake of ICT innovation;
- **Prioritise security and trust:** privacy and confidentiality of communications will remain a core focus, while 5G and AI will help us deliver ever resilient, secure and reliable networks;
- **Ignite start-up innovation** through 5G, gigabit networks and data-enabled services. Increasingly, the new networks will be more open and turn into a platform, which enables society to innovate on top of the infrastructure and to develop a secure European ecosystem for digital services.

We believe there is a strong link between achieving these socio-economic objectives and the ability of our companies to grow strong and innovate for European citizens and businesses.

None of us, alone, can achieve these objectives. Europe should act in the spirit of partnership among all public and private actors. We propose to focus on the following areas, which match the top political priorities outlined by President von der Leyen and her new College:

- **Give Europe an industrial policy for digital leadership**, ensuring that European businesses can collaborate to build global scale and compete in the global digital value chain. This requires a stable and sustainable regulatory environment at home, but also fair and balanced rules for competing with global players.
- **Enable European innovation, especially in data, IoT and AI.** Create room for EU companies to further innovate and to provide consumers with an expanded European choice for digital technologies and services. This is particularly desirable in the field of

data, IoT and AI-enabled innovation, which requires trustworthy solutions designed along European values.

- **Lower barriers to roll-out of gigabit infrastructures and strongly incentivise investment**, ensuring that network deployment happens swiftly and is not hampered by unfavourable investment conditions. This includes bringing down the cost of deployment for both mobile and fixed networks, taking a long-term view on the value of spectrum.
- **Actively address the fragmented European telecom market**, encouraging investors to build more national and cross-border scale in telecom infrastructure, including optimising mobile network sharing efficiencies, as a fundamental prerequisite for the EU digital industry to compete on a fast moving world market, improve coverage, offer better customer service and reduce environmental impact.

We are confident that digital networks are a primary enabler of Europe's socio-economic and geopolitical ambitions. We are ready to work together with all societal actors and with the new leadership in the European Parliament, European Commission and European Council to turn ambition into reality.

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