

## **Sovereignty in the digital Single Market**

Wednesday 11 September from 14:00 to 17:00 - Room JAN 6Q1

### **Description of the event**

The European economy is threatened in its sovereignty by far-reaching technological and geopolitical changes. In such a threatening environment, the window of opportunity to shape Europe's digital future is closing rapidly, considering that the global race for artificial intelligence is already in full swing. Digital sovereignty will undoubtedly seal the fate of the European economy.

The EU has so far undoubtedly enjoyed a worldwide leadership on digital regulation, in particular thanks to the GDPR, DMA, DSA, AI and Data Act, becoming a worldwide norm-setting power, but relying on an ambitious and effective enforcement by European and national public authorities ensuring that big players operate according to European rules.

However, the concentration of digital platforms represents a threat to European competitiveness, innovation capacity and sovereignty as well as a security challenge. Despite our efforts to implement digital pioneering regulations we remain deeply reliant on non-EU countries for e-commerce platforms, social media or search platforms.

If regulatory action is a powerful tool, it is insufficient to ensure a fully-fledged European digital sovereignty. We should focus on:

- ensuring the rollout of fast, widespread, secure and resilient connectivity infrastructure in order to shape them by ourselves and maintain control over them;
- fostering innovation and investments in order to address the severe trade imbalances in the digital sector and to develop digital entities as independent as possible from Big Tech and with a strong digital governance;
- building out a strong and effective enforcement capacity with the overall objective of powering up the European tech ecosystem and make it sovereign and competitive.

Hence, this event aims at gathering a unique set of experts to discuss the three aforementioned dimensions that are essential to for the EU to ensure its digital sovereignty.

### **Programme of the event**

#### ***14:00-14:15: Opening remarks***

- Andreas Schwab, EPP IMCO coordinator

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#### ***14:20-15:05 Panel 1: Scaling up European digital infrastructure***

In its White Paper on “How to master Europe’s digital infrastructure needs” published in February 2024, the Commission made a diagnosis of the availability and security of the digital infrastructure enhancing the necessity of rolling out fast, widespread, secure and resilient connectivity networks. It also considered several scenarios for public policy actions, in particular a possible future Digital Networks Act, that aims to build the digital networks of the future, to meet future connectivity needs of all end-users, to increase the competitiveness of the European digital sector and to ensure resilient and secure infrastructure. This panel will aim

at discussing Europe's diverse connectivity infrastructure challenges and what are the expectations of the stakeholders concerned regarding a possible upcoming legislative proposal.

***Moderator: Adina Valean MEP***

- Roberto Viola, Director General of DG CNECT, European Commission
- Lise Fuhr, Director General of ETNO (European Telecommunications Network Operators' Association)
- Juhan Lepassaar, Executive Director, ENISA (European Agency for Cybersecurity), or Ingrida Taurina, Head of Unit, ENISA

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***15:10-15:55 Panel 2: Fostering investments in order to address digital trade imbalances in a context of exponentially growing technologies and innovations***

The digital imbalance between the EU and third countries is steadily increasing. Their tech giants are exercising their market power along increasingly digital value chains, expanding them and increasingly encroaching on traditional business areas and hence threatening European sovereignty. This can also be seen in digital trade. While the EU has a trade surplus in physical goods, US companies are dominating digital services. In 2022, US exports of digital goods amounted to 336 billion euros, while European exports of digital goods to the US amounted to only 15 billion euros and this trend just worsened since 2017. Particularly with exponentially growing technologies and innovations, it is important to avoid emerging dependencies and lock-in effects or, where they exist, to consistently reduce them. In this context, the EU shall aim for open and interoperable digital infrastructure components that are essential to support European digital services (in cloud, education, healthcare, energy, etc).

***Moderator: Dora David MEP***

- Dr. Matthias Kullas, Head of Division: Economic and Fiscal Policy, Internal Market and Competition Policy, CEP (Centre for European Policy)
- Ulrich Ahle, CEO of GAIA-X
- Johnny Ryan, Senior Fellow, Irish Council for Civil Liberties and Open Markets Initiative

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***16:00-16:45 Panel 3: Ensuring regulatory compliance to prohibit competition-distorting behaviour***

Third-country e-commerce platforms practicing extremely low prices and often violating legislation on product safety, working conditions, sustainability, copyright and data protection are endangering European businesses and consumers. Protecting the Single Market relies on an effective implementation of the DMA, the DSA, the Product Safety Regulation as well as of the legislation on customs. This panel will aim at discussing how to better ensure the enforcement of European legislation and whether the current regulations are sufficient to prevent third-countries e-commerce platforms from distorting competition to the detriment of European companies and consumers.

***Moderator: Pablo Arias MEP***

- Victoria de Posson, Secretary General of EUTA (European Tech Alliance)
- Ilya Bruggeman, Director, Digital, Single Market, and Consumer Policy, EuroCommerce
- Representative of DG COMP, European Commission