

### Session III – A more competitive and resilient digital EU

A key dimension to ensure European competitiveness is to improve the conditions for new digital solutions to arise. Emerging technologies such as AI and quantum are at the same time essential to our competitiveness and our security. We have set an ambitious course for the European digital transition via the 2030-goals of the Digital Policy Programme - by creating goals for the use of digital technologies in European businesses, doubling the amount of unicorns in the EU via increased opportunities for upscaling and financing and much more.

Many efforts have been put in place to reap the potential of digitalisation to strengthen Europe's innovation and competitiveness. A vast array of innovation-supporting initiatives have been set in place during the last Commission mandate. For the last three years, the Digital Europe Programme has supported efforts to boost the uptake of digital solutions in both our economy and society. The AI Act has laid out a platform for testing AI-systems before roll out on the market in the form of regulatory sandboxes. Furthermore, the Commission's AI Innovation Communication will enhance the development and deployment of generative AI in Europe – for instance by dedicating the strong computing resources in the EuroHPC-network.

However, over the last years, the geopolitical concerns and crisis have impacted the stability of Europe's value chains and high-lighted risks of critical dependencies. Open strategic autonomy has become an increasingly important topic. Many have pointed this out - for instance, in Enrico Letta's report "Much more than a market" from April. It is evident that there is a delicate balance to strike between the openness that has allowed European businesses to trade and grow and the need to reduce dependencies, ensure resilient supply chains, and prevent technology leakage. The Commission addresses this in its Communication on a European Economic Security Strategy from June 2023 – with a focus on *promoting* EU's economic base and competitiveness, *protecting* against risks, and *partnering* with the broadest possible range of countries to address shared concerns and protect our joint interests.

The Communication was supplemented by a list of critical technologies in October 2023. Since then, the Commission and Member States have been working together to perform more granular risk-assessment within the four technology areas identified as particularly sensitive.

With this in mind, we would like to discuss the following at the D9+:

1. What are concrete measures that can contribute to Europe's competitiveness in the digital sector?
2. How do we ensure that the next Commission continues to focus on promoting digital capabilities that are critical to Europe's competitiveness? Which technologies should be prioritized and what are the best and most urgent measures to be taken?



3. How do you view the need for investments in strategically important technologies reflected in the current and coming European investment programmes?