Declaration for European Digital Sovereignty

At the heart of European digital policy lies digital sovereignty. It refers to the EU and its Member States' ability to act autonomously and to freely choose their own solutions, while reaping the benefits of collaboration with global partners, when possible. This involves setting and enforcing our own legal framework in accordance with internationally accepted principles. To achieve this, Europe needs to create conditions that strengthen economic security, competitiveness, resilience, and trust, and which preserve European democratic values in the digital world. Digital sovereignty does not mean isolation or protectionism; it means ensuring that Europe can act independently and in a self-determined manner based on international law, its own laws, values, and security interests, while thriving to international cooperation with its partners that share European values and principles.

Our common understanding of digital sovereignty is the ability of Member States to be able to regulate their digital infrastructure, data and technologies. It encompasses the ability of individuals, businesses and institutions in Europe to act independently in the digital world, allowing for autonomous decisions about the use, governance, and development of digital systems without undue reliance on external actors in order to protect our European democracies and our European values.

We, the signatories, declare our shared ambition to strengthen Europe's digital sovereignty in an open manner as a cornerstone of our economic resilience, social prosperity, competitiveness and security.

To operationalise this shared ambition, the **following principles** set out the **common orientations and priorities** that will guide our collaborative action. They provide a framework for strengthening Europe's capacity to act in the digital sphere, while ensuring consistency, balance, and openness in our approach.

- Efforts should **build on existing initiatives and frameworks**, avoiding unnecessary duplication and ensuring consistent implementation across the Union. At the same time, **clarity in terminology is required**: digital sovereignty should not be misinterpreted as protectionism, but rather as a common European approach that strengthens our ability to act freely while remaining in collaboration with global markets and partners. Europe should therefore remain open to global partners that share the same values as the EU and to collaborative efforts to continue benefiting from global scientific and technological cooperation, which in turn facilitates greater access to more diverse talents, perspectives, and innovations.

- Our priorities should focus on promoting European based solutions by creating a **supportive investment climate** as well as a **clear, predictable and fair regulatory framework** that encourages innovation and competitiveness, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises but also with regard to the strategic role large companies can play in value chains. Europe's strengths in **standardisation and interoperability** must be leveraged to ensure that European solutions are competitive on a global scale. Active and strategic European participation in international standardization, making European interests heard in the relevant standardization bodies, is an important cornerstone for European digital sovereignty.

- **Data sovereignty** is central to this effort as data are strategic assets when talking about digital sovereignty. Notably, Europe's most sensitive data should be granted effective protection from undue external interference or extra European laws. In that regard it is important to ensure the effective application of existing rules, combined with the development of practical instruments such as the European Digital Identity Wallet, Once-Only Technical System, common data spaces, and regulatory sandboxes.

- **Europe's technological independence** depends on **long-term vision and investments in strategic areas** such as high-performance computing, semiconductors, next-generation communication networks, satellite infrastructure, quantum technologies, cybersecurity, cloud and artificial intelligence. This includes encouraging business and public administrations to adopt these technologies in their processes in a safe and responsible manner. Since public funding has its limits, it is important to reduce barriers for private investments in European digital technology and explore what other actions are needed to unlock sufficient capital. It can also include targeted use of public procurement that would be relevant to support the demand for and market share of EU suppliers, thereby reducing strategic dependencies.

- **Open-source solutions** can play an important role enhancing digital sovereignty, provided they meet high cybersecurity standards and are complemented by reliable proprietary technologies where appropriate.

- Creating **European common assets** in artificial intelligence, data, cloud capacities and space infrastructure, including through public-private partnerships and open-source solutions (without prejudging the negotiations on the MFF), will strengthen Europe's ability to protect data and secure critical infrastructures.

- **Stocktaking of existing initiatives** can provide a valuable basis for identifying strengths and hidden champions, and for guiding new measures.

- At the same time, Europe must take a **proactive role in shaping international policy leveraging its strengths** that will create a vibrant global digital ecosystem. Cooperation in the areas such as secure and trusted digital infrastructure, emerging technologies, supply chains resilience, raw materials, cybersecurity, data flows, digital standards and digital skills is vital to strengthening our economic resilience and ensuring our relevance in the global digital order. It is also essential that the EU continues to be a strong voice in the debate on global standards and governance for emerging and disruptive technologies. The aim is to boost the EU's and partners' respective tech competitiveness and digital sovereignty, and promote joint interests, trade and investment, research or regulatory cooperation, and attract talents in the fields of digital, AI and tech.

- **Dependencies must be managed strategically, risk-based and responsibly**: the goal is not self-sufficiency which is neither realistic nor desirable, but the ability to act with confidence and autonomy where it matters most, notably by the effective protection of Europe's most sensitive data from undue external interference.

- A **strong governance framework** is needed as a cross-cutting condition for success. Rather than creating new and potentially duplicative structures, we should focus on optimising and integrating what already exists, thereby ensuring both clarity and efficiency. Governance should strengthen trust, reduce fragmentation, and provide a transparent mechanism for collective decision-making. In addition, governance should be inclusive and employ a multi-stakeholder approach, involving public and private actors as well as civil society and academia, to ensure legitimacy, expertise and broad support.

- Ultimately, digital sovereignty depends not only on technologies and infrastructures, but also on people. A focus on investments in **education and research, digital skills, and digital literacy** is indispensable to empower European labor force, citizens, public administrations, and businesses. Without these, even the best frameworks will remain fragile. Joint learning, pooling of expertise, strategies to attract foreign talents and the sharing of best practices among Member States will further strengthen Europe's collective capacity to act. Media- and information literacy is essential to raise knowledge about the digital landscape and to learn how to navigate safely and must be fostered through lifelong learning to ensure our resilience and competitiveness.

- Digital technologies and infrastructures offer immense opportunities for innovation, science, prosperity, and solving societal challenges but also expose Europe to vulnerabilities as well as risks arising from geopolitical fragmentation, cyber threats, and strategic dependencies. While **reinforcing our internal strengths and remaining**

open to trusted global partner, resilience can be improved by developing **robust cybersecurity capabilities and skills across the EU,** also through fostering homegrown cybersecurity solutions from innovative EU companies turning these challenges into drivers of competitiveness and resilience.

- **Fair, efficient, trustworthy and competitive markets** remain a prerequisite to the success of these initiatives and investments. We must use the supervision and regulatory tools at our disposal on digital markets, such as AI and cloud, to unlock the market positions and predatory practices.

- Finally, digital sovereignty is also about **protecting democracy and strengthening trust in our societies**. The spread of disinformation and deepfakes, as well as the sharp increase in cyberattacks, threatens our security, the integrity of democratic institutions and public trust. Strengthening information integrity and cybersecurity, resilient and trusted digital supply chains, engaging in multi-stakeholder globally inclusive dialogues, raising digital and media literacy, promoting a diverse and independent (online) media landscape, and enabling independent and trustworthy digital services are therefore essential.

We, the signatories, therefore commit ourselves to working together towards strengthening Europe’s digital sovereignty. This Declaration reflects our shared political will to reduce strategic dependencies, strengthen Europe’s technological capabilities, preserve democratic resilience, and position Europe as an open, reliable, innovative, and values-based partner in the global digital ecosystem.

This Declaration, being a non-legally binding document, represents a shared political commitment of the signatories to strengthen the Member States and Europe’s digital sovereignty and to guide future action in a coordinated and cooperative manner.