

DIGITALEUROPE welcomes the post-2020 EU budget proposal and calls for a swift adoption

Brussels, 8 May 2018

On 2 May 2018, the European Commission has unveiled its budget proposal post-2020, the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for 2021-2027. DIGITALEUROPE welcomes the Commission's proposal to boost the European Union's budget on digital innovation. Despite the UK's withdrawal from the EU, the proposed new long-term budget will overall allow the EU to invest more than €1 trillion between 2021-2027.

"We welcome a budget focusing on the European digital economy. The MFF's ambition is a step in the right direction for what is critical for the EU's competitiveness and ability to be able to deal with difficult socio-economic issues", declared Cecilia Bonefeld-Dahl, Director-General of DIGITALEUROPE.

"The creation of a standalone Digital Europe Programme shows Europe's commitment to shape and support the digital transformation with projects in crucial areas, from artificial intelligence to cybersecurity and advanced digital skills. However, these efforts will only be effective in combination with real investments and education reform at Member State level to produce a workforce with a wide range of skills from the most basic to the most advanced. The EU can show real leadership through its 'intellectual and human' capital", she added.

"What appears to be missing are mechanisms to fund and accelerate Europe's aging telecommunication infrastructure. Super-fast internet speeds in even the most remote regions will also be crucial for the future of the EU. In addition, legislative packages at both national and EU level should follow close behind to deliver incentives for industry to contribute financially, innovate through the creation of high growth start-ups as well as to know where to cooperate globally on R&D", she concluded.

Even though its expected budget is lower than the figures first suggested, Horizon Europe, the new Framework Programme for Research & Innovation, will benefit from increased funding to support digital technologies. In the new digital era, European citizens need to have the appropriate skills to live and work, therefore continued investment in people, especially on upskilling and reskilling the workforce through the European Social Fund+ is also the right approach. Finally, doubling the resources of Erasmus+ will strengthen learning mobility across the EU and contribute to modernise education.

DIGITALEUROPE calls for a swift adoption of the MFF by the Council and the Parliament. We believe that both institutions will defend the current budget priorities to make sure that research & innovation in ICT and investment in digital technologies and skills remain high on the EU agenda.

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ABOUT DIGITALEUROPE

DIGITALEUROPE represents the digital technology industry in Europe. Our members include some of the world's largest IT, telecoms and consumer electronics companies and national associations from every part of Europe. DIGITALEUROPE wants European businesses and citizens to benefit fully from digital technologies and for Europe to grow, attract and sustain the world's best digital technology companies. DIGITALEUROPE ensures industry participation in the development and implementation of EU policies.

DIGITALEUROPE's members include in total over 25,000 ICT Companies in Europe represented by over 60 Corporate Members and 38 National Trade Associations from across Europe. Our website provides further information on our recent news and activities: <http://www.digitaleurope.org>

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