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Taking the circular economy to the next level

Reacting to the Commission’s new Circular Economy Plan, Cecilia Bonefeld-Dahl, Director General of DIGITALEUROPE, said:

“The transition to a low-carbon, climate neutral, resource efficient and circular economy is one of the world’s most pressing challenges and the digital sector is ready to do its part.”

“We welcome the efforts made so far and the link recently made in the new industrial strategy, although we consider that the Commission’s circular economy approach continues to focus too much on consumer products and not enough on industry.”

“Europe already has an extensive and well-established framework of regulations for consumer electronics. The problems lie in the coherence between existing tools, the implementation, and the enforcement across the Member States. Fixing this would take the circular economy to the next level”

“We also believe that there should be a greater emphasis on the digitalisation of our industrial sector, which is Europe’s strength. Given its relative size compared to the market for consumer products, there is enormous untapped potential here to reduce the use of material resources, improve energy efficiency and cut emissions.”

DIGITALEUROPE is convinced that digital technologies are key enablers for attaining the sustainability goals of the European Green Deal. At the same time, we are also aware of our footprint and are committed to ensuring a sustainable digitalisation.

The European framework of product policies plays an important role in promoting circular economy\(^1\). It is an area where the EU has shown global leadership and, when done well, has the potential to drive international regulatory alignment. The lifecycle of Electrical and Electronic Equipment (EEE) is subject to a comprehensive set of different pieces of EU legislation covering the whole product lifecycle. This has expanded over the years to also integrate circular economy elements\(^2\). For example, around 20 Ecodesign regulations, the Restriction of Hazardous Substances (RoHS) directive and the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive

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2. DIGITALEUROPE mapped the existing legislative framework in its call to action for digital and sustainability https://www.digitaleurope.org/resources/digitalisation-as-key-for-a-sustainable-europe-our-call-to-action-for-the-eus-strategic-agenda-2019-2020/
(WEEE) directive. DIGITALEUROPE members are committed to complying with each of them and in many instances have initiatives or programmes in place that go beyond compliance.\(^3\)

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\(^3\) See DIGITALEUROPE paper on “The Contribution of the Digital Industry in a Circular Economy”  
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.

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