A Green and Digital Transformation of the EU

Ministerial Declaration

Smart use of clean digital technologies can serve as a key enabler for climate action, environmental sustainability, and reaching the UN Sustainable Development Goals by improving energy and resource efficiency and facilitating circular economy, reduced emissions, pollution, biodiversity loss and environmental degradation, and improved resilience to climate change impacts. At the same time, the ICT sector should **ensure the environmentally sound design and deployment of digital networks and technologies and products**. Europe can compete globally in the green tech market, particularly by promoting innovative technologies, low-power electronics and environmental sustainability of ICT solutions.

In this context, **we welcome the establishment of the European Green Digital Coalition** that will accelerate the ICT sector's transition towards a sustainable, climate neutral, circular and zero pollution economy while at the same time contributing to innovative, sustainable, inclusive and resilient society and economy. We stand ready to engage with industry to contribute to the success of the Coalition.

Our goal is to accelerate and take the global lead on the green digital transformation, building on the Council Conclusions of 17 December 2020 on "Digitalisation for the Benefit of the Environment", as well as on the Digital Strategy [COM/2020/67 final].

We therefore will work together to use the significant potential of the Recovery and Resilience Facility and the earmarking of expenditure on reforms and investments to support the mutually reinforcing green (at least 37% of funding) and digital transitions (at least 20% of funding). We also welcome the use of other relevant EU instruments for deploying green solutions supporting digital networks, technologies, data and applications to speed up the path to climate neutrality and accelerate the green and digital transition in priority areas such as energy, mobility, agriculture, construction and industry, as identified in the Green Deal and Circular Economy Action Plan. Mobilising investments - public and private - in clean, low-emission and digital technologies as well as in skills and competencies to utilise these adequately, will help create decent jobs and sustainable growth. This will allow Europe to come out from the COVID 19 crisis stronger and greener, and contribute to the uptake of green digital solutions globally. It is important to acknowledge that European technological leadership builds on digital advancements and rapid deployment of green and digital innovations as well as an open and competitive single market.

Specifically, we will engage and work together to:

➢ Accelerate the development and deployment of digital technologies, such as Very High Capacity Networks allowing to build 5G and 6G networks, fibre optics, High performance computing (HPC), Quantum computing and Quantum Communication, Internet of Things (IoT), Blockchain technologies, Cloud solutions, , Artificial

intelligence (AI) and big data, as key solutions to ensure the impact of climate adaptation and mitigation policies, decrease pollution, optimise energy and resource efficiency, develop a circular economy, promote precision farming and helping to combat the loss of biodiversity;

➢ Join forces for the development and continuous operation of a very high precision digital model of the Earth to monitor and simulate natural and human activity – Destination Earth;

➢ Make high quality data available and accessible through standardised and interoperable common European data spaces to unleash the potential from data on realising the European Green Deal;

➢ Lead on the usage of quality data, data analysis models and energy efficient Artificial intelligence-based solutions for sustainable decision-making;

➢ Promote the use of a digital twin in the form of a Building Logbook for new public buildings; as well as work with local authorities and other relevant stakeholders to set up a European network of digital twins of the physical environment; Support EU cities and regions to use green digital solutions in their transition to climate neutrality;

➢ Fully exploit the potential of technology, such as low power and other advanced electronics, IoT, AI and Blockchain, to contribute to buildings meeting the highest full life-cycle environmental standards;

➢ Increase the energy efficiency by modernising connectivity and electricity distribution networks, enabled by the digital transformation of systems and processes;

➢ Take full advantage of digital technologies (including through standardisation) to support smart and sustainable mobility systems;

➢ Apply secure digital technologies and solutions to improve resource efficiency and allocation, encourage industrial symbiosis and asset sharing, eco-design of products, promoting durability, repair (including software updates), reuse and recycling;

➢ To develop a digital product passport for tracking and tracing products and materials, to increase information flows along value chains, facilitate value retention processes, new and sustainable business models, and to improve consumer empowerment and sustainable choices through information and awareness;

➢ Speed up the green and digital transformation of public services by making public services available on line in an inclusive manner (education, healthcare, agriculture and e-government services) and actively facilitating telework during the pandemic and beyond, including by accelerating the roll-out of energy efficient ultra-fast broadband networks;

➢ Contribute to the use of a climate neutral, sustainable and energy efficient cloud and blockchain services in cooperation with the European Cloud Federation the European Blockchain Services Infrastructure (EBSI); Promote the sustainability of AI

applications by encouraging the development and use of energy efficient algorithms ("greener algorithms");

➢ Propose that the deployment of networks and data centres comply with appropriate environmental sustainability standards, while promoting the fast deployment and roll-out of high quality communications networks; support environmental sustainability criteria in funding for broadband networks and data centres, including but not limited to CEF and RRF;

➢ In considering the efficiencies of public procurement, promote and support making green public procurement the default option overall, and establish a sustainable baseline for public sector procurement of ICT products, data centres and cloud services, thereby stimulating a strong European market for green technologies;

➢ Develop energy efficient and sustainable hardware technologies, produced with less environmental impact, as a foundation for a sustainable value chain for all digital technologies;

➢ Consider the use of EU funding programmes and to leverage private equity, including venture capital, to support the European green tech start-ups and SMEs;

We will ensure a regular assessment of the progress made, which should feed into the Commission's ongoing monitoring activities. We commit to using a repository to promote the sharing of experiences, best practices and key takeaways related to the implementation and follow-up of this Declaration.