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NOTE

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| From: | Presidency |
| To: | Permanent Representatives Committee/Council |
| No. Cion doc.: | 11900/21 |
| Subject: | Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the 2030 Policy Programme “Path to the Digital Decade” - Progress report |

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Commission adopted the proposal for a Decision establishing the 2030 Policy Programme “Path to the Digital Decade” (PtDD) on 15 September 2021¹. The instrument aims to ensure that the EU achieves its objectives and targets towards a digital transformation of our society and economy in line with EU values, reinforcing its digital leadership and promoting human-centred, inclusive and sustainable digital policies empowering citizens and businesses.

¹ doc. 11900/21.

2. The proposal sets out the concrete digital targets which the Union as a whole is expected to achieve by the end of the decade, as first delineated in the Digital Compass Communication. It then sets out a novel form of governance with Member States (MS), through a mechanism of annual cooperation between the Unions institutions and the MS to ensure that the Union jointly achieves its ambition.

More specifically, the aim is to obtain:

- Basic digital skills for at least 80% of the population and 20 millions of highly skilled digital professionals;
- Secure and performant sustainable digital infrastructures (Gigabit for everyone, 5G everywhere, higher semiconductors production, secure cloud edge nodes and quantum acceleration computers);
- Digital transformation of businesses (3/4 of EU companies using Cloud/AI/Big Data, financing of unicorns, digital intensity for SMEs);
- Digitalisation of public services (100% online availability of public services and medical records, 4/5 of EU population using eID).

To this end, the Commission proposed a mechanism of continuous cooperation between the Union's institutions and the MS to identify ways to address deficiencies in areas where the most recent progress report and available data point to significant gaps and shortcomings. The monitoring and reporting on digital progress would be presented in an annual report on the “State of the Digital Decade” and submitted to the Parliament and Council.

3. In the European Parliament, the proposal was assigned to the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE). The Rapporteur for the file is Martina Dlabajová (Renew Europe, Czechia). The ITRE Committee has not yet adopted its report.
4. On 27 October 2021 the European Economic and Social Committee was requested to provide its opinion on the proposal, which is expected in the first quarter of 2022. The European Committee of the Regions was consulted on 10 November 2021 and its opinion requested by the end of January 2022.

II. WORK WITHIN THE COUNCIL

5. In the Council, the examination of the proposal has been carried out in the Working Party on Telecommunications and Information Society (hereinafter: WP TELECOM). Discussions were initiated by the SI Presidency during the meeting of 28 **September** 2021. Delegations warmly welcomed the initiative and praised the flexibility accorded to MS in achieving digital targets. At the same time, the timeline set by the Commission was considered as very ambitious and some delegations flagged their preference for a Commission-MS cooperation rather than a full-fledged monitoring mechanism.

Then the attention shifted toward the risk of fragmentation between more and less technologically advanced EU areas, spanning various industries and population groups. Finally, there were some inquiries about available EU funding and some fear of duplicating efforts in relation to the introduction of the European Digital Infrastructure Consortia (EDICs), a new instrument intended to facilitate the implementation of Multi-Country Projects (MCPs).

6. The meeting on 19 **October** was dedicated to the first four articles of the Decision, covering the subject, definitions, general objectives and targets. Questions revolved around the legal form chosen, the quasi-absence of green/digital transition among the objectives, the consequences of non-compliance, and a potential increase in administrative burden for the public sector and SMEs.
7. On 16 **November** the meeting opened with remaining comments and questions on the first four articles. In view of the digital gaps across and within MS, the level of ambition was judged as too high or too low, depending on the targets considered. Some delegations criticised obligations and possible sanctions for MS, while others argued that some formulations would need defining for the sake of implementation and overall coherence. Finally, there were inquiries regarding certain figures used by the Commission in relation to the various targets.

8. The SI Presidency will strive to successfully conclude the first reading of the proposal still during its term. The FR Presidency can be expected to ask for official comments and suggestions from delegations early next year, with a view to facilitating the drafting of the first compromise proposal.

III. CONCLUSION

9. The COREPER is invited to take note of this progress report from the Presidency, with a view to submitting it to the TTE Telecom Council at its meeting on 3 December 2021.
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