Council of the European Union

Brussels, 20 November 2025
(OR. en)

15315/1/25
REV 1

TELECOM 396
CYBER 327
RELEX 1461
COPS 585

OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
No. prev. doc.:	14928/25
Subject:	Conclusions on Advancing the International Digital Strategy for the European Union
	- Council Conclusions (20 November 2025)

Delegations will find in the annex the Council Conclusions on advancing the International Digital Strategy for the European Union as approved by the Foreign Affairs Council at its meeting held on 20 November 2025.

Council Conclusions on Advancing the International Digital Strategy for the European Union

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

RECALLING
- The conclusions of the European Council of April 2024
- A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence of 25 May 2022
- A Competitiveness Compass for the EU of 19 January 2025
- The European Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles for the Digital Decade of 23 January 2023
- The Declaration by the European Union and its Member States on a Common Understanding of the Application of International Law to Cyberspace of 18 November 2024

BUILDING ON
- Council Conclusions of 18 June 2022 and 26 June 2023 on EU Digital Diplomacy
- Council Conclusions of 21 May 2024 on the Future of EU Digital Policy
- Council Conclusions of 6 June 2025 on reliable and resilient connectivity

I. Digital and technology at the core of EU external action

1. WELCOMES the Joint Communication from the Commission and the High Representative on An International Digital Strategy for the European Union. The Strategy provides an ambitious and strategic approach to the EU's engagement in global digital affairs. It aims to boost the EU's global technological competitiveness, foster innovation, strengthen security and defence, enhance the synergies between the EU's digital policies and CFSP/CSDP, contribute to a sustainable, secure and trusted global digital transformation, and shape global tech and digital governance in cooperation with partner countries. The type of engagement pursued with third countries and the choice of the areas of cooperation should be in line with the geopolitical, geoeconomics and security interests of the EU and its Member States.

2. STRESSES the transformative power of technologies on the EU's foreign, security, defence, and economic security policies, and on our democracy. In the face of geopolitical shifts, rapid technological change, and growing global competition for innovation, talent and investment, it is crucial to advance Europe's digital transformation, reinforce its sovereignty and strengthen its own open digital ecosystem. This requires reinforced international partnerships and close collaboration with trusted partner countries and international organisations on digital innovation and governance.

3. REAFFIRMS its commitment to a human-centric, human rights-based and multistakeholder approach to the governance of digital technologies, rooted in universal human rights, including gender equality and non-discrimination, and in fundamental freedoms, democratic values and the principles of the rule of law.

4. EMPHASISES the role of technology in today's geopolitical context and the need for ambitious and action-oriented digital diplomacy to advance the EU's foreign policy, security and defence objectives.

5. RECOGNISES that enhancing the EU's competitiveness, safeguarding the security and defence interests of the EU and its Member States as well as promoting economic security require deeper and broader international cooperation, including in critical and emerging technologies, such as AI, advanced connectivity, semiconductors and quantum technologies.

II. Building partnerships and alliances for Europe

6. WELCOMES the objective to deepen, broaden and connect the EU's global network of partnerships through a strategic and mutually-beneficial approach. SUPPORTS the establishment of a Digital Partnership Network to facilitate the EU's cooperation with trusted partner countries. The Network could exchange information, pursue common projects, and regularly convene at a political and technical level.

7. EMPHASISES the importance of timely and substantive involvement of Member States in developing and implementing the EU's Digital Partnerships, Dialogues and Trade and Technology Councils and their priorities, in full respect of the EU's institutional framework. UNDERLINES the value of the close involvement of EU tech businesses and other relevant stakeholders, including civil society and the research community, for the collective advancement of shared goals.

8. SUPPORTS cooperation with partner countries on European digital public infrastructure solutions, such as the European Digital Identity Framework and the European Interoperability Framework, working towards enabling cross-border public digital services.

9. CALLS for the further development of security and defence partnerships by leveraging dual-use technological capabilities, positioning the EU security and defence tech industry as a pivotal partner and catalyst of innovation in critical and emerging technologies. ENCOURAGES the Commission and the High Representative to further enhance the strategic and mutually beneficial partnership with NATO regarding the application of critical and emerging technologies in security and defence, in full respect of the agreed guiding principles.

10. SUPPORTS the expansion of digital trade chapters in free trade agreements, stand-alone digital trade agreements or broader and deeper agreements on Digital Partnerships and Digital Dialogues. STRESSES the importance of the free flow of data with trust between the EU and partner countries to advancing interoperability and harmonisation of data governance and regulation in accordance with EU standards.

11. REAFFIRMS its commitment to a sustainable and inclusive global digital transformation and UNDERLINES the importance of close cooperation with partner countries and stakeholders to promote environmentally responsible digital innovation. STRESSES the need to ensure alignment of relevant partnerships with the objectives of the European Green Deal, as well as the Global Digital Compact, the Paris Agreement, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

12. UNDERLINES the key role of the digital transformation in the context of the Global Gateway Strategy and the digital economy packages. HIGHLIGHTS the importance of advancing secure and trusted connectivity in EU international initiatives. Advanced connectivity is essential for closing digital divides, both within and between countries, as is the promotion of digital literacy.

III.   Leveraging the role and influence of the EU tech industry globally

13. HIGHLIGHTS the prominent role of EU tech companies — including SMEs, start-ups, scale-ups and large companies — and their critical contribution to the EU's Digital Partnerships by fostering business-to-business and business-to-government cooperation with a focus on investment opportunities and tech innovation. RECOGNISES the crucial role of EU tech companies in multilateral and multistakeholder fora and encourages increased participation in digital governance and standardisation.

14. WELCOMES the creation of the EU Tech Business Offer, including support for EU tech companies' access to partner country markets. The Offer should support i.a. the deployment of secure and trusted connectivity, digital public infrastructure and AI and software solutions. STRESSES that the Offer should be tailored to the needs of partners and managed jointly by the EU and its Member States in a 'Team Europe' approach. This will enable the EU to position itself as a partner of choice for third countries while strengthening innovation and tech development within the EU. ENCOURAGES the active promotion of the EU Tech Business Offer to ensure that European companies, including SMEs, start-ups, scale-ups and large companies, are informed and involved in the structuring of the Offer and can fully benefit from this initiative.

15. ENCOURAGES the Commission, the High Representative and Member States to strengthen the digital dimension of Global Gateway, continue the development of digital hubs in partner countries and promote the EU Tech Business Offer, in particular by:
    - Strengthening work on secure and trusted digital infrastructure, such as sustainable data centres and AI factories, advanced connectivity, including 5G/6G, submarine cables and satellite connectivity.

- Furthering the Team Europe approach in digital initiatives under Global Gateway by ensuring coordination among Member States and the EU, including EU financing institutions. HIGHLIGHTS the importance of cooperation at headquarters and among delegations, missions and embassies, using available capacities such as the Digital Diplomacy Network and the Digital for Development Hub.
- Leveraging the expertise of the innovation ecosystem to enhance digital transformation efforts.
- Seeking opportunities for cooperation between the EU's Tech Business Offer and partner country initiatives to leverage complementarities and create synergies.

IV. Partnering for a secure and trusted digital transformation

16. UNDERLINES the need to enhance the EU's work in intensifying cooperation with international partners on secure and trusted digital infrastructure, supply chains, cybersecurity, resilience, and tackling cyber threats. SUPPORTS further developing and implementing the EU's Cyber Diplomacy Toolbox in line with the revised implementing guidelines[1].

17. STRESSES the importance of capacity-building in partner countries to support their secure and inclusive digital transformation. ENCOURAGES closer coordination between digital development and cyber capacity-building efforts, as well as between Member States, the EU and international partners to maximise coherence, effectiveness and strategic impact.

18. UNDERLINES the need to uphold international law, including international humanitarian law, and promote the UN framework for responsible State behaviour in cyberspace. SUPPORTS continued EU and Member States engagement in shaping the UN Global Mechanism on developments in the field of ICTs in the context of international security and advancing responsible State behaviour in the use of ICTs, and ENCOURAGES continued international, bilateral and cross-regional cooperation with partners, including the multistakeholder community, within the Global Mechanism.

---

[1] Revised Implementing Guidelines of the Cyber Diplomacy Toolbox 10289/23

19. WELCOMES the continued commitment to countering foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI), including by bolstering the capacities of partner countries, while upholding democracy and fundamental rights including freedom of expression.

V. The EU leading in global digital governance

20. STRESSES that the EU must maintain a leading role in global digital and tech governance, including internet governance, and strive to promote a human-centric digital governance, firmly anchored in universal human rights, including gender equality, fundamental freedoms and democratic principles. This should be based on an inclusive, multistakeholder approach with the active engagement of all stakeholders, particularly from developing countries. EMPHASISES the pivotal role of the EU and its Member States in proactively forging alliances in multistakeholder and multilateral fora, regional organisations and other leading regulators on digital services and critical and emerging technologies.

21. ENCOURAGES the Commission and the High Representative to ensure that the EU spearhead the development and implementation of global human-centric and human rights-based standards in partnership with global stakeholders in areas such as secure and trustworthy AI, chips, advanced connectivity, cybersecurity, quantum technologies, and the open, free, neutral, global, interoperable, reliable, and secure internet. This encompasses facilitating active engagement in international standardisation bodies.

22. HIGHLIGHTS the importance of broad participation of EU Member States in key international processes and fora, such as the World Summit on the Information Society process and +20 review, the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), and the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) conferences and Working Groups. REAFFIRMS the importance of the WSIS framework for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the UN Global Digital Compact (GDC), promoting greater coherence and coordination across international digital governance processes. The EU is firmly committed to the implementation of the GDC.

VI. Next steps

23. The Council CALLS ON the Commission, the High Representative and the Member States to collaborate closely in implementing the EU's International Digital Strategy and to harness the momentum to bolster the EU's security, innovation and global competitiveness.

24. The Council INVITES the Commission and the High Representative regularly to assess progress, inform and engage with Member States on ongoing and planned activities to implement the Strategy; ENCOURAGES Member States to regularly update on their contributions to the implementation of the Strategy, in particular their international activities complementing it.

25. The Council INVITES the Commission, the High Representative and Member States to jointly define and materialise the EU Tech Business Offer, involving the European technological ecosystem, the Global Gateway Business Advisory Group and the Digital for Development Hub. The Council ENCOURAGES the Commission to assess the barriers EU companies face when engaging with Global Gateway digital initiatives.

26. CALLS ON the Commission and the Council to examine how to enhance industry engagement in global standardisation fora like the ITU standardisation sector, the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF), the 3rd Generation Partnership Project (3GPP), the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO), the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), and the European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI), where relevant, in close cooperation with European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administrations (CEPT).

27. The Council CALLS ON the High Representative to ensure that critical and emerging technologies are addressed from the perspective of CFSP, CSDP and international cooperation in the Political and Security Committee (PSC) on a regular basis and at the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) by November 2026.