Council of the European Union

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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	AOB for the meeting of the Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council on 6 June 2025 : Need for strenghtening Europe's digital sovereignty
	- Information from Austria

In times of increasing global crises and geopolitical tensions, the concept of digital sovereignty is becoming more and more important. For Austria, it is a top priority and it is taken into account both explicitly and implicitly as part of the various digitalisation measures. The concept goes beyond technological independence: it is not autarky that is important, but the ability to utilise third-party technologies in an assessable and controllable manner. In Austria, digital sovereignty is understood as 'the sum of all abilities and possibilities of individuals and institutions to be able to fulfil their role(s) in the digital world independently, self-determinedly and securely'. Accordingly, digital sovereignty enables the 'ability to act in the (digital) world in a self-determined manner and to resist the will of other actors.'

Thus, with regard to individual organisations and organisational units, especially but not only in the public sector, digital sovereignty includes the availability of suitable technologies and data, the ability to evaluate digital technologies, the avoidance of one-sided dependencies and the ability to choose responsibly between one's own solutions and options from trustworthy partners.

In this context, Austria has taken initiatives to strengthen digital sovereignty in public administration: As part of the Digital Action Plan, a theoretical model, the "Sovereignty Compass", was developed to assess digital dependencies. Building on this, the Sovereignty Compass is currently being put into practice across local authorities in order to create awareness and an opportunity to assess digital dependencies. The 'Guidelines for the use of open source software in the federal administration' supplement this approach with regard to the identification and management of dependencies.

However, Austria's national efforts can only be fully realised if they are embedded in joint European efforts. Thus, streamlining our efforts on a European level is key to strengthen digital sovereignty.

The Austrian government would like to invite the European ministers responsible for digitalisation to an event in Vienna in autumn to discuss joint measures.