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MEETING DOCUMENT

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Working Party on Telecommunications and Information Society
Subject:	FR comments "Draft Council Conclusions on the Future of Digital Policy" (st 7619/24 Macro table)

Delegations will find in the annex the FR comments on "Draft Council Conclusions on the Future of Digital Policy". (st 7619/24)

First compromise proposal st 7619/24	Drafting Suggestions	Comments
FUTURE OF EU DIGITAL POLICY		
THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,		
RECALLING		
– The Council conclusions of 7 June 2019 on the future of a highly digitized Europe beyond 2020 entitled "Boosting digital and economic competitiveness across the Union and digital cohesion",		
– The Commission Communication of 18 February 2020 on A European strategy for data,		
– The Council conclusions of 5 June 2020 on Shaping Europe's digital future,		

First compromise proposal st 7619/24	Drafting Suggestions	Comments
— The Declaration of 8 December 2020 on Digital Society and Value-Based Digital Government,		
– The Council conclusions of 11 December 2020 on Digitalisation for the Benefit of the Environment on 11 December 2020,		
— The Ministerial Declaration of 19 March 2021 on A Green and Digital Transformation of the EU,		
– The Commission Communication of 21 April 2021 on Fostering a European approach to Artificial Intelligence, and its Annex entitled “Coordinated Plan on Artificial Intelligence 2021 Revision”,		

First compromise proposal st 7619/24	Drafting Suggestions	Comments
– The Commission Communication of 2 February 2022 on An EU Strategy on Standardisation Setting global standards in support of a resilient, green and digital EU single market,		
– <u>The Commission Communication of 11 May 2022 on A Digital Decade for children and youth: the new European strategy for a better internet for kids (BIK+).</u>		
— The Declaration of June 2022 ‘Toulouse Call for a Green and Digital Transition in the EU’,		
– The Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 December 2022 establishing the Digital Decade Policy Programme <u>2030</u> (hereafter ‘Digital Decade Policy Programme’) <u>and the Commission</u>		

First compromise proposal st 7619/24	Drafting Suggestions	Comments
<u>Communication of 27 September 2023 on the State of the Digital Decade 2023,</u>		
– The European Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles for the Digital Decade of 23 January 2023,		
– <u>The Council conclusions of 13 March 2023 on competitiveness, single market and the economy,</u>		
– The Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 May 2023 on a European Year of Skills,		
– The Commission Communication of 15 June 2023 on the implementing of the 5G Cybersecurity toolbox,		

First compromise proposal st 7619/24	Drafting Suggestions	Comments
– The Joint Communication of 20 June 2023 on a European Economic Security Strategy,		
– The Council conclusions <u>of 18 July 2022</u> and <u>of 26 June 2023</u> on EU Digital Diplomacy,		
– The Commission Communication of 11 July 2023 on An EU initiative on Web 4.0 and virtual worlds: a head start in the next technological transformation,		
– The Commission Recommendation of 3 October 2023 on critical technology areas for the EU's economic security for further risk assessment with Member States,		
	- The Council position and findings of 23 November 2023 on the application of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR),	This Council position is really recent and should be added to as a reference.
– <u>The Council Recommendation of 23 November 2023 on improving the provision of</u>		

First compromise proposal st 7619/24	Drafting Suggestions	Comments
<u>digital skills and competences in education and training.</u>		
– <u>The Commission AI innovation package of 24 January 2024 to support Artificial Intelligence startups and SMEs.</u>		
– <u>The White Paper of 21 February 2024 on How to master Europe’s digital infrastructure needs?.</u>		
– <u>The Commission Recommendation of 26 February 2024 on Secure and Resilient Submarine Cable Infrastructures.</u>		
– <u>[The Council conclusions on the future of cybersecurity]</u>		
The Council of the European Union		

First compromise proposal st 7619/24	Drafting Suggestions	Comments
1. UNDERLINES that the digital transformation offers significant opportunities for a better quality of life, economic growth and sustainability and is essential to contribute to an innovative, resource-efficient and fair economy and society in the Union.		
2. STRESSES that a successful digital transformation of our societies can only be founded on <u>mutual</u> trust between <u>among all players, including</u> Member States, <u>citizens and businesses</u> companies, and among citizens and UNDERLINES the importance of pursuing our European approach to digitalisation based on principles such as transparency and accountability; the EU's commitment taken in the Digital Decade <u>Policy</u> Programme to ensure a <u>secure, safe, inclusive and sustainable</u> digital transformation, based on technological leadership, competitiveness and on a human-centric approach, creating a safe space where	STRESSES that a successful digital transformation of our societies can only be founded on <u>mutual</u> trust between <u>among all players, including</u> Member States, <u>citizens and businesses</u> companies, and among citizens and UNDERLINES <u>the importance of pursuing our European approach to digitalisation based on principles such as transparency and accountability.</u> the EU's commitment taken in the Digital Decade <u>Policy</u> Programme to ensure a <u>secure, safe, inclusive and sustainable</u> digital transformation, based on technological leadership, competitiveness and on a human-centric approach, creating a safe space where	The references to the principles of transparency and accountability are essential and should be retained. Similarly, in the context of a political declaratory document, it seems more appropriate to call for the protection of fundamental rights rather than simply respect for them.

First compromise proposal st 7619/24	Drafting Suggestions	Comments
the EU values, including rule of law and inclusiveness, are promoted and the fundamental and digital rights are protected respected.	the EU values, including rule of law and inclusiveness, are promoted and the fundamental and digital rights are protected respected.	
3. RECALLS the EU's commitment taken in the Digital Decade Programme to ensure a digital transformation based on technological leadership and on a human-centric approach, creating a safe space where the EU values, including rule of law and inclusiveness, are promoted and the fundamental and digital rights are protected.		
4. HIGHLIGHTS the EU's ambition to play a leading global role globally in the digital transformation and digital governance that promotes democratic values, sustainable digitalisation and puts people and their universal human rights at the centre, in line with the EU Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles.		

First compromise proposal st 7619/24	Drafting Suggestions	Comments
5. WELCOMES the Commission's efforts to build strong international digital partnerships and alliances that reflect and promote European values and support a resilient, green and competitive digital market and that promote the EU approach to digital governance, enhance EU economic security and competitiveness, as well as the Commission's efforts to strengthen cooperation with likeminded partners in relevant multilateral and multistakeholder fora. HIGHLIGHTS the importance to ensure that this work in the international fora is developed and conducted by Member States, the European External Action Service and the European Commission, in close cooperation. WELCOMES the aim to increase European leadership in the development of global interoperable standards to drive greater impact from European research and innovation activities and using standardisation as an		

First compromise proposal st 7619/24	Drafting Suggestions	Comments
international scaling platform for European values and innovations.		
6. REAFFIRMS that digital sovereignty <u>open strategic autonomy and resilience</u> is essential for the Union to chart its own path in the digital transformation, to enhance the Union's open strategic autonomy and resilience, to strengthen its economy <u>and industry</u> , and to promote a sustainable technological development across the Union. RECALLS that this digital sovereignty must <u>should</u> be viewed in light of <u>line with</u> the Union's commitment to a fair, open and values <u>rules</u> -based global digital market.	REAFFIRMS that digital sovereignty, open strategic autonomy are essential for the Union to chart its own path in the digital transformation to strengthen its economy and industry and to promote a sustainable technological development across the Union RECALLS that digital sovereignty should be viewed in light of the Union's commitment to a fair, open and rules-based global digital market.	Why has the notion of "digital sovereignty" disappeared? We felt it was essential in this document and it has disappeared in several places. The French authorities would like to remind that “Digital sovereignty” is agreed language, it should therefore be preserved.
	EMPHASISES the need to support and develop open source and digital commons to strengthen our open strategic autonomy, and to contribute to the preservation of the collective control and valuation of both quality and re-use of data and digital infrastructures, and consequently to	We insist on mentioning the digital commons. Open strategic autonomy requires alternatives, particularly to proprietary solutions. By promoting open models, the digital commons are helping to develop accessible alternatives.

First compromise proposal st 7619/24	Drafting Suggestions	Comments
	foster innovation, social value and sustainability.	This proposal is in line with the report adopted in 2022 at the Toulouse Digital Assembly, the conclusions on digital diplomacy and the work carried out by the Commission as part of Next Generation Internet.
7. EMPHASISES that the digital transformation needs <u>ambitious</u>, combined and coordinated investments at EU level <u>in addition to investments from public and private actors at national level</u>. These investments, in particular from the Digital Europe Programme (<u>DIGITAL</u>) and the Connecting Europe Facility (<u>CEF Digital</u>), are essential to foster innovation, digital skills, infrastructure and the development and uptake of digital technologies across the EU. <u>UNDERScores the importance of ensuring that procedures in the EU funding programmes are streamlined with a view to improving certainty and predictability and to fostering a level playing field for all the actors involved, including SMEs and start-ups.</u>		

First compromise proposal st 7619/24	Drafting Suggestions	Comments
CALLS UPON the Commission to promote synergies between digital research <u>and innovation</u> endeavours under Horizon Europe and practical deployment initiatives within the Digital Europe Programme <u>DIGITAL</u> and CEF <u>Digital</u>, as these programmes are instrumental to achieve the goals of the Union's Digital <u>Policy</u> Decade Programme.		
Digital rules and governance		
8. NOTICES the significant number of EU legislative acts that have been adopted in the digital field in recent years <u>to strengthen the Digital Single Market</u> and STRESSES the need to prioritise in the coming years their effective and efficient implementation. UNDERLINES the need to carefully <u>thoroughly</u> assess any new legislative act <u>initiative, in particular</u> with a view to <u>ensure a balance between innovation and regulatory burden by guaranteeing a</u>		

First compromise proposal st 7619/24	Drafting Suggestions	Comments
<u>coherent regulatory framework, minimising administrative burden and</u> to preventing the risk of hampering the establishment of an agile and innovation-friendly European ecosystem.		
9. ACKNOWLEDGES the setting up of several EU boards, <u>in order</u> to ensure the coordination of the national competent authorities, as well as <u>the</u> EU enforcement role such as in the Digital Services Act, the Digital Market Act, the Data Governance Act, the Data Act and the Artificial Intelligence Act. UNDERScores the need for the Commission and the Member States to, explore <u>foster</u> synergies, <u>avoid duplication</u> and adopt a holistic <u>coordinated approach to the existing governance structures in enforcing those acts, with a view to ensuring convergence, coherence and</u> coordination and <u>in order</u> to avoiding the fragmentation of the EU's d<u>Digital ecosystem</u> <u>Single Market</u> as well as to ensuring legal		

First compromise proposal st 7619/24	Drafting Suggestions	Comments
clarity certainty and security and to reducing the administrative burden, in particular for SMEs.		
9a. <u>CALLS UPON the Commission to reflect on tools and solutions to ensure consistency in the application of existing legislative acts and to explore ways to reduce administrative burden, in particular for SMEs.</u>		
9b. <u>ACKNOWLEDGES that, in light of the growing importance of digital technologies, including Internet of Things, the current legal framework entails, to address cybersecurity vulnerabilities in digital products and processes, important cybersecurity elements such as security and resilience by design. Therefore, UNDERLINES the need to ensure the inherent coherence between the digital and cybersecurity EU policy.</u>		

First compromise proposal st 7619/24	Drafting Suggestions	Comments
10. UNDERLINES the importance of an effective and efficient implementation and enforcement of the Artificial Intelligence Act to develop and promote trustworthy artificial intelligence (hereafter ‘AI’). EMPHASISES in this regard that a close cooperation between the AI Office, the AI Board, <u>the AI Scientific Panel</u> and the advisory forum is key and INVITES the Commission to also reflect upon the future role of the European Centre for Algorithmic Transparency <u>and leveraging its expertise</u> beyond the Digital Services Act.		The French authorities reitere their support to the paragraph.
11. EMPHASISES the importance of harmonised standards and certifications requirements, in particular in the context of AI, cybersecurity, digital identity, data sharing mechanisms and services and common European data spaces in order to further promote <u>enable</u> and stimulate the adoption of digital technologies aligned with European		The French authorities reitere their support to the paragraph.

First compromise proposal st 7619/24	Drafting Suggestions	Comments
legislative requirements. ENCOURAGES the Commission to issue standardisation requests in a timely, open and coherent manner, involving Member States, <u>European standardisation organisations</u> and stakeholders appropriately, facilitating Member States' and businesses' compliance to the largest extent possible.		
Digital and cutting-edge technologies		
12. RECOGNISES the importance of a common <u>and strategic</u> European approach to innovative digital technologies such as virtual worlds , advanced semiconductors, generative AI, quantum technologies, <u>6G technology</u> , blockchain infrastructure, digital twins <u>and virtual worlds</u> , and to any future technologies, as enablers for <u>the</u> technological sovereignty <u>development</u> and competitiveness of the EU at a global level, as well as for <u>sustainable</u> economic development, social and environmental benefits .		The French authorities reitere their support to the paragraph.

First compromise proposal st 7619/24	Drafting Suggestions	Comments
ENCOURAGES the promotion of dynamic ecosystems around key digital technologies supporting their development, deployment and uptake among EU businesses <u>public and private sectors</u>, based on openness and a level playing field, particularly for SMEs and start-ups and scale-ups.		
13. UNDERLINES the importance of supporting and enabling a <u>resilient, greener, digital, more safe and secure, resilient, and sovereign</u> European ecosystem in semiconductors and microelectronics and HIGHLIGHTS, in this regard, the swift start of the implementation of the <u>European Chips Act</u> Chips for Europe Initiative.		
14. STRESSES the economic and strategic potential of quantum technologies for the scientific, <u>technological</u> and industrial competitiveness of the EU and CALLS on the		

First compromise proposal st 7619/24	Drafting Suggestions	Comments
Commission and the Member States to continue <u>and coordinate</u> efforts to create synergies between research and development activities, support joint initiatives and encourage further investments for <u>in</u> EU quantum companies from the public, academic and private sectors.		
15. ACKNOWLEDGES that the current legal framework introduces important elements such as compliance by design, interoperability and regulatory sandboxes which constitute key tools for the development of digital technologies and should be further used in future legislative initiatives, as well as in the enforcement of existing legislation. UNDERLINES the importance of pursuing a balance between innovation and regulation through guidance and tools which may accompany businesses, governments and consumers when navigating through the continuously evolving digital landscape.		

First compromise proposal st 7619/24	Drafting Suggestions	Comments
16. RECOGNISES the importance of European Digital Infrastructure Consortia (hereafter ‘EDICs’) for developing strategic multi-country projects that pool resources to achieve large-scale projects that no <u>a</u> single Member State entity <u>cannot tackle</u> <u>undertake</u> on its own. EDICs and other implementing mechanisms for multi-country projects are essential for serving businesses and citizens <u>and businesses</u>, and their further development should be supported.		
17. RECALLS that the European <u>Economic Security Strategy</u> and approach to economic security is based on promoting the Union’s competitiveness by bolstering its single market, innovation, technological and industrial capacities; protecting the Union’s economic security through a range of existing and new instruments; partnering with like-minded		

First compromise proposal st 7619/24	Drafting Suggestions	Comments
international partners who share EU concerns with a view to strengthening international rules, institutions and economic security through diversified and improved trade agreements, and investing in sustainable development. EMPHASISES the importance for the Union's competitiveness of ensuring the security of critical emerging technologies resulting from significant research, development, and investments made in the Union, and of protecting against the risks of technology leakage, while preserving maximum levels of economic openness and dynamism.		
Democratic and Societal effects of digitalisation		
18. ACKNOWLEDGES the existence of a delicate balance between on the one hand <u>need</u> to fostering innovation, entrepreneurship and capital market development and <u>to maximise the</u>	ACKNOWLEDGES the existence of a delicate balance between on the one hand <u>need to</u> fostering innovation, entrepreneurship and capital market development and <u>to maximise the</u>	We believe that we should be even more ambitious in the wording of this paragraph and call for proper and effective implementation of the DSA and DMA texts.

First compromise proposal st 7619/24	Drafting Suggestions	Comments
<u>benefits of digitalisation for all, while at the same time</u> on the other hand establishing safeguards regarding risks and challenges related to digital technologies <u>and services</u>, including <u>discrimination</u>, disinformation, illegal content online, <u>online violence</u>, fake profiles, identity theft, <u>security breaches</u> and data protection issues and security breaches. STRESSES <u>in this regard</u> the importance of the new rules framing obligations for online platforms and online search engines, notably through the Digital Services Act (DSA) and the Digital Markets Act (DMA). ENCOURAGES the Commission to further pursue and enhance the implementation of these landmark rules and their enforcement and to further address issues linked notably to recommender systems and dark patterns, in order to ensure on the one hand that societal risks stemming from such systems are tackled, in particular for the protection of	<u>benefits of digitalisation for all, while at the same time</u> on the other hand establishing safeguards regarding risks and challenges related to digital technologies <u>and services</u>, including <u>discrimination</u>, disinformation, <u>information manipulation</u>, illegal content online, <u>online violence</u>, fake profiles, identity theft, <u>security breaches</u> and data protection issues and security breaches. STRESSES <u>in this regard</u> the importance of the <u>General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in successfully protecting their privacy for the EU residents and of the</u> new rules framing obligations for online platforms and online search engines, notably through the Digital Services Act (DSA) and the Digital Markets Act (DMA) <u>to increase comprehensively the safeguards afforded in the EU and the greater consideration for data governance as a whole.</u> <u>ENCOURAGES the Commission to further pursue and enhance the implementation of these landmark rules</u>	We again propose to include the manipulation of information, in addition to disinformation. If this is not accepted, then the notion of information integrity should be included in the conclusions. We feel it is important to reiterate the importance of the current data protection framework, which provides consistent protection throughout the Union for all its residents and which has been positively assessed by the Council, and to support the positive effects of the horizontal framework in a global way. Furthermore, the elements referring to the risks to be guarded against that have been deleted should be reintroduced.

First compromise proposal st 7619/24	Drafting Suggestions	Comments
children, and on the other hand that existing obligations are not circumvented.	<u>and their enforcement</u> and to further address issues linked notably to recommender systems and dark patterns, <u>in order to ensure on the one hand that societal risks</u> stemming from such systems <u>are tackled, in particular for the protection of children, and on the other hand that existing obligations are not circumvented.</u>	
19. <u>HIGHLIGHTS EXPRESSES ITS CONCERN</u> that in return for access to digital services, users often provide vast amounts of data without fully understanding how their data is used and the implications thereof. ENCOURAGES the Commission to <u>further reflect on the societal risks stemming from digital services and to consider measures to address issues related to addictive designs and excessive online tracking and data harvesting following</u> resulting from the use of tracking technologies by providers of digital services. ;	19. <u>EXPRESSES ITS CONCERN</u> that in return for access to digital services, users often provide vast amounts of data without fully understanding how their data is used and the implications thereof. <u>ENCOURAGES the Commission to further reflect on the societal risks stemming from digital services and to consider measures to address issues related to addictive designs. and excessive online tracking and data harvesting following resulting from the use of tracking</u>	The French authorities are open to a debate and to consider actions on addictive designs. They are however cautious about the term “excessive” online tracking. Data mining and online tracking are part of business models in the digital economy. We feel it is important here to emphasise the protection of children's privacy as an essential element, as did the previous version, rather than placing it on the same level as the development of greater autonomy for minors in environments

First compromise proposal st 7619/24	Drafting Suggestions	Comments
and, in this regard, <u>RECALLS the need for special attention on the well-being of children, and youth, limiting their protecting them from exposure to certain types of content, and safeguarding their data, and protecting their privacy as essential elements of their online safety while empowering them to make informed choices and respecting their right to privacy.</u>	technologies by providers of digital services. <u>RECALLS the need for special attention on the well-being of children, and youth, limiting their protecting them from exposure to certain types of content, and safeguarding their data, and protecting their privacy as essential elements of their online safety in order to while empowering them to make informed choices and respecting their right to privacy.</u>	where they are at risk. Their protection must remain the prerequisite for the development of the tools made available to them.
20. INVITES the Commission to examine <u>the functioning of, and potential gaps in the EU's current legal framework, such as the General Data Protection Regulation and the Digital Services Act, in relation to the Directive on privacy of and electronic communications, taking into account technological development and the evolution of digital services and their business models, the growth of the data economy as well as the broader EU legislative</u>	20. INVITES the Commission to examine the functioning of, and potential gaps in the EU's current legal framework, such as the General Data Protection Regulation and the Digital Services Act, in relation to the Directive on privacy of and electronic communications, taking into account technological development and the evolution of digital services and their business models, the growth of the data economy as well as the broader EU legislative	France supports the objective of devising a text that balances the protection of privacy with the needs of our LEA and our economies.

First compromise proposal st 7619/24	Drafting Suggestions	Comments
<u>landscape of relevance for the digital context, such as the General Data Protection Regulation and the DSA.</u>	<u>landscape of relevance for the digital context, such as the General Data Protection Regulation and the DSA.</u> INVITES the Commission to continue discussions on the <u>Directive on privacy of and</u> electronic communications in a way that preserves the Council's general approach, clearly excluding defense and national security from the scope of the text and explicitly authorizing data processing for criminal purposes, and maintaining the provisions on business model aspects, notably cookies.	
21. CALLS for <u>ENCOURAGES</u> the development of concrete tools <u>use-cases</u> to support users; online platforms and public and private sector services and national authorities in the verification of digital identity <u>use of the European Digital Identity Wallet and trust services based on the European Digital Identity Framework</u>, such as a system of verified and		The French authorities support the development of age verification schemes online.

First compromise proposal st 7619/24	Drafting Suggestions	Comments
non-verified users. CALLS upon the Commission to offer guidance, establish safeguards and develop harmonised policies and tools in close cooperation with Member States to ensure secure, <u>user-friendly</u> and interoperable digital identity solutions <u>and trust services, including for age and identity verification.</u>		
<u>21a. INVITES the Commission and the Member States to reflect, in the framework of the review of the EU's Digital Decade Policy Programme, on mechanisms to monitor the societal and economic risks stemming from digitalisation such as inequality, poverty and social exclusion.</u>	21a. INVITES the Commission and the Member States to reflect, in the framework of the review of the EU's Digital Decade Policy Programme, on mechanisms to monitor the societal and economic risks stemming from digitalisation such as inequality, poverty and social exclusion.	The French authorities remind that the Digital Decade has just been adopted and that the KPI are discussed in a working group of the Digital Decade Board in Brussels. In contrary, they expect to lower the monitoring. If additional KPI were to be additionned, they French authorities would welcome a reflexion on environmental KPI or objectives.
Data strategy		
22. EMPHASISES the significant steps made towards the development of a robust EU data	EMPHASISES the significant steps made towards the development of a robust EU data	The French authorities are attached to preserve the sentence “where applicable and subject to

First compromise proposal st 7619/24	Drafting Suggestions	Comments
governance which improves the free flow of, <u>fair access to, and use of data in a secured, interoperable and trusted manner</u> within the Union, across sectors and, where applicable and <u>subject to appropriate safeguards</u>, with third countries. RECOGNISES the importance of the data economy, as a key enabler for Europe to prosper in the digital age and HIGHLIGHTS the importance to <u>of continueing</u> the development of sectorial data spaces <u>within and across sectors, based upon experience from existing data spaces and consultation with the European Data Innovation Board,</u> which are a key element to facilitate data sharing.	governance which improves the free flow of, <u>fair access to, and use of data in a secured, interoperable and trusted manner</u> within the Union, across sectors and, where applicable and <u>subject to appropriate safeguards</u>, with third countries. RECOGNISES the importance of the data economy, as a key enabler for Europe to prosper in the digital age and HIGHLIGHTS the importance to <u>of continueing</u> the development of <u>secure and sovereign</u> sectorial data spaces <u>within and across sectors, while ensuring the protection of data and thus sufficient trust from the citizens,</u> based upon experience from <u>existing data spaces and consultation with the European Data Innovation Board,</u> which are a key element to facilitate data sharing.	appropriate safeguards” in order to protect personal and non-personal data from third countries legislations and preserve Members states’ ability to regulate for legitimate public policy objectives. The notions of "fair access to, and use" and "interoperability and trust" seem to us to be inappropriate here, particularly in a paragraph that mixes intra-EU initiatives with those with third countries, in relation to which the development of interoperable solutions raises reservations, particularly as regards the transfer of personal data. We would also reiterate our previous comments: it is also essential to stress the need for robust data protection guarantees when the issue of data transfers is addressed, and the need to develop and strengthen public confidence in this respect.

First compromise proposal st 7619/24	Drafting Suggestions	Comments
23. UNDERLINES that cloud infrastructure and services are an essential aspect of the European digital sovereignty and competitiveness and thus important for the EU to fully benefit from the data economy. ACKNOWLEDGES the important steps <u>made</u> towards the development of interoperable, trusted, safe and secure European cloud <u>and edge</u> services and. CALLS upon the Commission to continue its efforts, <u>building on the implementation of the Data Act, and further</u> assess the way to promote interoperability and portability and to ensure a fair, <u>non-discriminatory and balanced broad</u> access to cloud <u>and edge</u> solutions among <u>for businesses, and in particular</u> SMEs. UNDERLINES <u>the importance of ensuring an open, secure and competitive European cloud and edge market to the benefit of European businesses and users and that cloud and edge infrastructure and</u>	23. ACKNOWLEDGES the important steps <u>made</u> towards the development of interoperable, trusted, safe and secure European cloud <u>and edge</u> services. CALLS upon the Commission to continue its efforts, building on the swift implementation of the Data Act, and further assess the way to promote interoperability and portability and to ensure a fair and balanced broad access to cloud <u>and edge</u> solutions among <u>for businesses, and in particular</u> SMEs. UNDERLINES <u>the importance of ensuring an open, secure, trusted and competitive European cloud and edge market to the benefit of European businesses and users and that cloud and edge infrastructure and services are an essential aspect of the European digital sovereignty and competitiveness and thus important for the EU to fully benefit from the data economy.</u> ACKNOWLEDGES the important steps	Here too we wonder about the disappearance of developments linked to European digital sovereignty. See comment above. The French authorities are attached to the mention of a European cloud and of the swift implementation of the Data Act. The French authorities will be attached to the notion of trust for the development of European cloud providers.

First compromise proposal st 7619/24	Drafting Suggestions	Comments
services are an essential aspect of the European digital sovereignty and competitiveness and thus important for the EU to fully benefit from the data economy. ACKNOWLEDGES the important steps towards the development of interoperable, trusted, safe and secure European cloud and edge services and CALLS upon the Commission to continue its efforts and further assess the way to promote interoperability and portability and to ensure a fair and balanced access to cloud solutions among business and SMEs. INVITES the Commission to continue its work on stimulating targeted investments <u>in European</u> cloud <u>and edge services</u> and the development of new <u>these next generation</u> EU cloud services.	towards the development of interoperable, trusted, safe and secure European cloud and edge services and CALLS upon the Commission to continue its efforts and further assess the way to promote interoperability and portability and to ensure a fair and balanced access to cloud solutions among business and SMEs. INVITES the Commission to continue its work on stimulating targeted investments <u>in European</u> cloud <u>and edge services</u> and the development of new <u>these next generation</u> EU cloud services.	
Digital infrastructure		
24. EXPRESSES the importance of attaining the Digital Decade <u>Policy</u> Programme		

First compromise proposal st 7619/24	Drafting Suggestions	Comments
<u>connectivity</u> targets and supporting an innovative <u>and competitive</u> digital infrastructure ecosystem, i.e. to ensure all EU households have access to Gigabit speeds and <u>a wireless</u> <u>highspeed network with performances at least equivalent to that of 5G technology</u> or equivalent mobile technology by 2030. In that regard, CALLS on the Commission and the Member States to stimulate and facilitate secure and resilient joint <u>the roll-out of secure and resilient 5G</u>; and <u>edge</u>; fibre networks; <u>as well as to facilitate infrastructure sharing to lower the costs of deployment of very high-capacity networks and speed up their deployment across the Union</u> and uniformising procedures. UNDERLINES the importance of leveraging the single market to facilitate the investments needed to ensure such joint roll-out.		
25. AGREES with <u>WELCOMES</u> the <u>objectives of</u> the Commission's continued	(...)	While they welcome the publication of the white paper, the French authorities consider that

First compromise proposal st 7619/24	Drafting Suggestions	Comments
efforts to ensure sovereign, secure and resilient digital networks and infrastructures across the Union and globally, including with regard to 5G and fibre networks and <u>as well as</u> submarine cables, and <u>WELCOMES</u> in this regard the <u>Commission White Paper on How to master Europe's digital infrastructure needs?</u> and the <u>Recommendation on Secure and Resilient Submarine Cable Infrastructures.</u> ENCOURAGES the Commission and the Member States to thoroughly analyse the hurdles within <u>carefully assess the current</u> regulatory landscape; to ensure a <u>safe</u>, robust and <u>future-proof framework for</u> of Europe's digital infrastructures <u>and networks across the EU</u> that can foster innovation, <u>including taking into account</u> through the growing convergence between telecommunications and cloud services; anticipating the review of the Electronic Communications Code; and to ensure level playing field and competition in electronic	INVITES the Commission to re-define <u>develop</u> a long-term vision on digital networks and prepare, on the basis of the Commission report <u>on the functioning of the Electronic Communications Code</u> expected by 21 December 2025. <u>prepare the ground for possible policy and regulatory actions to strengthen complete the single market for electronic communications services, as well as to look into the security and resilience of submarine cables.</u>	it is too early to prepare actions to reform or strengthen the single market. The revision of the Electronic Communications Code has just been revised and the telecommunications market needs stability. In addition, they will be opposed to a pan-European management of spectrum and to the establishment of the country of origin principle for the telecommunications market. They will be cautious about deregulatory measures, asking for a careful assessment and debate within Member States before acting.

First compromise proposal st 7619/24	Drafting Suggestions	Comments
communications markets and competitiveness to the benefit of end-users. INVITES the Commission to re-define <u>develop</u> a long-term vision on digital networks and prepare, on the basis of the Commission report on the functioning of the Electronic Communications Code expected by 21 December 2025, prepare the ground for possible policy and regulatory actions to <u>strengthen</u> complete the single market for electronic communications services, as well as to look into the security and resilience of submarine cables.		
26. ENCOURAGES the Commission and the Member States to <u>continue and strengthen efforts to</u> establish an attractive policy framework for 6G research, <u>and</u> development and deployment <u>as well as for 6G deployment following a standardisation roadmap for 6G,</u> based on the appropriate assessment of coverage and capacity requirements for 6G use cases and		The French authorities support the paragraph and remind that the European roadmap must be adopted quickly, before the EU enters in discussion with third countries, in order to first define a pan-European vision of 6G. The introduction of the environmental impact is positive.

First compromise proposal st 7619/24	Drafting Suggestions	Comments
the early identification <u>recognition</u> of spectrum needs <u>and its environmental impact</u> .		
27. ACKNOWLEDGES the Commission's efforts via the European High Performance Computing Joint Undertaking to coordinate European investment in major supercomputing infrastructures and accompanying software solutions, which will be fundamental to secure European leadership in a huge range of scientific and industrial applications, and WELCOMES the broadening of the Joint Undertaking's mission so that it also invests in AI-oriented supercomputers, in the creation of AI factories, whose resources should be made available to <u>a large number of public and private users, in particular</u> European AI start-ups to train their large AI models and generative AI systems.		

First compromise proposal st 7619/24	Drafting Suggestions	Comments
28. ACKNOWLEDGES that the current legal framework introduces important elements such as security and resilience by design, in light of the growing importance of digital connectivity, including Internet of Things. ENCOURAGES identifying and addressing the security weaknesses of all digital products and processes.		
Sustainable <u>Green and</u> digital transitionformation		
29. STRONGLY UNDERLINES that the digital transformation should go hand in hand with the green transition. <u>HIGHLIGHTS</u> that The development <u>and increasingly widespread use</u> of digital technologies such as generative AI, cloud <u>and edge</u> computing, virtual worlds, blockchain, and high-performance computing, as well as the increased amount of data and data centres <u>quantum technologies and the Internet of</u>	29. STRONGLY UNDERLINES that the digital transformation should go hand in hand with the green transition. <u>Indeed, ensuring the ITC environmentally sound design, with low energy and material consumption is an opportunity to foster a competitive circular European economy.</u> <u>HIGHLIGHTS</u> that The development <u>and increasingly widespread use</u> of digital technologies such as generative AI, cloud	The new wording indicates that the new technologies cited constitute an opportunity to deploy a circular economy sector in digital technology on a European scale. However, there is no mention of eco-designing these technologies even though all the technologies cited have an impact on the environment, and this impact could and should be evaluated and reduced, in particular through the eco-design of

First compromise proposal st 7619/24	Drafting Suggestions	Comments
<u>Things can offer opportunities to foster a competitive European circular economy, to reduce the environmental footprint and to accelerate the green transition. However, ACKNOWLEDGES that these digital technologies and the increased amount of data and data centres requires-large amounts of resources including energy, water and critical raw materials, therefore exerting pressure on the environment and climate.</u>	<u>and edge computing, virtual worlds, blockchain, and high-performance computing, as well as the increased amount of data and data centres quantum technologies and the Internet of Things can offer opportunities to foster a competitive European circular economy, to reduce the environmental footprint and to accelerate the green transition. However, ACKNOWLEDGES that these digital technologies and the increased amount of data and data centres requires-large amounts of resources including energy, water and critical raw materials, therefore exerting pressure on the environment and climate.</u>	this equipment and source codes used to design the supported digital services.
30. ENCOURAGES to urgently reduce the environmental footprint of the ICT sector and to support its transition to climate neutrality by 2050. UNDERLINES the need to promote awareness, and <u>including through transparency requirements and digital sobriety, as well as to develop solutions for businesses, public sectors</u>		The French authorities welcome a renewed ambition to reduce the environmental footprint of the ICT sector. They would like to underline the importance of an holistic and multicriteria approach that includes energy consumption but also water

First compromise proposal st 7619/24	Drafting Suggestions	Comments
and consumers, <u>such as sustainability by design</u>, to reduce their digital footprint and e-waste in order to avoid inefficient consumption and in line with the principle to reduce, reuse and recycle.		consumption, the use of metals and rare earth elements and waste treatment
	30bis. STRESSES the need to take into account the resilience of electricity production and network with the increase of communication terminals and infrastructures. UNDERLINES therefore the need to plan their deployment in a reasoned and compatible way for the land development/urbanisation.	The aim of this addition is to highlight the relation between data and devices in the environmental footprint and to promote a reasonable use of devices and data by the consumers, and greener conceptions by the businesses. Sustainable digital transformation must also take into account the resilience of production systems and notably avoid problem of peak-demand.
31. STRESSES the importance <u>for the Commission and the Member States to support the deployment of</u> to deploy and combined digital and green solutions for future innovation and growth in all industries and public		We would welcome work on different parts of the value chain, such as : low-energy processors for HPC and AI or the deployment of more efficient and sustainable networks and infrastructures.

First compromise proposal st 7619/24	Drafting Suggestions	Comments
organisations that have measurably net positive environmental impact. <u>In that regard, EMBRACES the potential of the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation, in particular the digital product passport, to improve communication of information on the environmental impact of products. In addition, WELCOMES the EU action plan on digitalising the energy systems that will improve communication of information on the energy and environmental impact of data centres, notably through the development of an environmental labelling scheme for data centres.</u>		
	31bis. UNDERLINES the exponential growth of Internet of Things, which requires a specific attention to question its net positive environmental impact.	We would like to underline the potential strong impact of Internet of Things in terms of environmental footprint regarding its environmental benefit.
32. CALLS for developing evidence-based assessment methodologies for measuring the digital environmental footprint as well as the digital enablement positive handprint effect of		

First compromise proposal st 7619/24	Drafting Suggestions	Comments
<u>digital technologies based on high-quality, comparable, reliable and standardised data,</u> and ENCOURAGES the Commission, Member States and stakeholders to use these methodologies to explore and harness the enormous <u>potential positive net environmental impact</u> of digitalisation to assist the EU in achieving its goal of transitioning to climate neutrality by 2050 and the energy efficiency targets for 2040 <u>2030</u>.		
	32bis. UNDERLINES the exponential growth of AI usage, and particularly generative AI, which requires a specific attention, and STRESSES the need to develop methodologies to assess the environmental impact of AI. ENCOURAGES, in this context, stakeholders to consider frugal AI solutions when relevant	We would like to underline the potential strong impact of generative AI in terms of environmental footprint, which requires a thorough evaluation methodology. Moreover, we would like to introduce the concept of “frugal AI” as there is already a concept of “frugal innovation” at European level, as France is starting to work on this issue.
33. RECALLS the review of the EU's Digital Decade Programme and INVITES the Commission and Member States to reflect on		

First compromise proposal st 7619/24	Drafting Suggestions	Comments
adding a target related to a greener digital transition with the aim to incentivise the deployment of innovative technologies to the benefit of climate action.		
Digital skills		
34. STRESSES the need to increase efforts to bridge the digital divide, <u>including the gender digital divide</u>, by developing digital awareness, knowledge, and <u>skills and competences</u> of all citizens, with a particular attention to vulnerable groups <u>people, during all stages of life</u>. UNDERLINES the role of the Digital Decade <u>Policy</u> Programme in ensuring that the digital transformation responds to the needs of the European society and labour market, including through regional and local networks. INVITES all institutions to support these efforts <u>to bridge the digital divide</u> and to support the development and uptake of solutions to better		

First compromise proposal st 7619/24	Drafting Suggestions	Comments
equip and accompany European citizens, <u>public and private sectors</u> through the digital transformation.		
35. STRESSES the need for an enhanced focus on ways to attract and retain talent in the EU in order to reinforce the competitiveness of the European Union and its positioning as a global digital player. CALLS on the Commission to develop a multifaceted strategy to support Member States in attaining the digital skills objectives of the Digital Decade <u>Policy Programme</u>, notably through academic and industrial partnerships, lowering barriers to attract and employ digital talent as well as adopting European recognition schemes for the adoption of auto-certification or micro-diplomas <u>recognising micro-credentials in the labour market in line with the EU Council Recommendation on a European approach to micro-credentials</u>.		The French authorities would support actions to attract and retain talent in Europe.

First compromise proposal st 7619/24	Drafting Suggestions	Comments
36. EMPHASISES the need to promote regular formal and non- regular formal education in ICT and Science tific Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics ('STEAM') areas to further develop digital skills <u>and competences</u> , with a particular attention focus on to women <u>and girls</u> , since the severe and persistent gender gap in the digital sector undermines how digital solutions are designed and deployed, with proven negative consequences for social <u>inclusion, gender equality and welfare overall economic growth</u> .	36. EMPHASISES the need to promote regular formal and non- regular formal education in ICT and Science tific Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics ('STEAM') areas to further develop digital skills, including green coding, eco-design and green gesture to make it the long-term standard , and <u>competences</u> , with a particular attention focus on to women <u>and girls</u> , since the severe and persistent gender gap in the digital sector undermines how digital solutions are designed and deployed, with proven negative consequences for social <u>inclusion, gender equality and welfare overall economic growth</u> .	The aim of this addition is to support green coding and eco-design as part of the skills to be broadened and to raise awareness of green gesture in the course and in the students'/trainees' career path, making them the norm in the long term.
Digital governments		
37. UNDERLINES the need for digital governments, driven forward by the human-centric, data-driven and AI-enabled		

First compromise proposal st 7619/24	Drafting Suggestions	Comments
transformation of the public sector, while embedding <u>core principles for good governance such as</u> interoperability, inclusiveness, <u>transparency</u> and sustainability as their core principles .		
38. INVITES the Commission to continue its support for the development of interoperable public digital services and the cross-border interconnection of public administrations' cloud infrastructures, <u>including cloud and edge infrastructures</u> , to achieve their increased resilience, efficiency and sustainability, and to further reflect, <u>together with Member States</u> , on their technical, legal, <u>semantic</u> and operational barriers <u>and on how to overcome them</u> . In this regard, <u>CALLS on the Commission to promote knowledge exchange and to support joint initiatives between Member States</u> .	INVITES the Commission to continue its support for the development of interoperable public digital services based on open standards and the cross-border interconnection of public administrations' cloud infrastructures (...)	

First compromise proposal st 7619/24	Drafting Suggestions	Comments
39. EMPHASISES the need to consider digital and interoperability implications of policies from the outset, in order to <u>address potential issues ahead of time</u>, to ensure the smooth implementation of legislation and <u>to reduce the regulatory reporting burden as well as compliance costs on businesses</u>. In this regard, INVITES <u>CALLS UPON</u> the Commission to put digital-ready policymaking in practice through guidelines, tools and trainings <u>with the aim to bridge the gap between policy design and implementation</u>.		
<u>International dimension of EU digital policy</u>		
	WELCOMES the work done to develop a coherent EU Digital Diplomacy by Member States, the High Representative and the Commission and RECALLS for a further strengthening of the Team Europe approach. CALLS UPON the Commission, the High Representative and the Member States and the	With regard to the international aspect, we would firstly like to reiterate the importance of the digital diplomacy aspect and therefore move up paragraph 39c. Furthermore, we call for this section to be limited as much as possible, as it is likely to duplicate the previous conclusions on digital

First compromise proposal st 7619/24	Drafting Suggestions	Comments
	need to cooperate to ensure a proactive and coordinated approach to develop a stronger, more strategic, coherent and effective EU policy and action in global digital affairs and to confirm EU engagement and leadership at international level.	diplomacy and the work to come for the adoption of new conclusions in June 2024.
<u>39a. CONSIDERS that digital matters, which are important enablers for in the EU's competitiveness and security, gain significant international weight in the constantly changing geopolitical landscape.</u>	CONSIDERS that digital matters, which are important enablers for in the EU's competitiveness and security, gain significant international weight in the constantly changing geopolitical landscape.	
<u>39b. WELCOMES the development and strengthening of international and regional digital partnerships, as well as cooperation in and with relevant multilateral and multistakeholder fora, in order to promote EU strategic interests as well as to protect universal human rights and fundamental values.</u>		

First compromise proposal st 7619/24	Drafting Suggestions	Comments
<u>39c. CALLS UPON the Commission, the High Representative and the Member States to ensure a proactive and coordinated approach to develop a stronger, more strategic, coherent and effective EU policy and action in global digital affairs and to confirm EU engagement and leadership at international level. In this context, WELCOMES the work done to develop a coherent EU Digital Diplomacy by Member States, the High Representative and the Commission and CALLS for a further strengthening of the Team Europe approach.</u>	39c. CALLS UPON the Commission, the High Representative and the Member States to ensure a proactive and coordinated approach to develop a stronger, more strategic, coherent and effective EU policy and action in global digital affairs and to confirm EU engagement and leadership at international level. In this context, WELCOMES the work done to develop a coherent EU Digital Diplomacy by Member States, the High Representative and the Commission and CALLS for a further strengthening of the Team Europe approach.	See above.
<u>39d. EMPHASISES the need to develop an EU strategy on the multistakeholder digital governance, including the governance of the Internet to set out a common position to uphold in international fora, including on issues such as internet standards and protocols. WELCOMES the aim to increase European leadership in the development of global standards to drive greater</u>	EMPHASISES the need to develop an EU strategy on the multistakeholder digital governance, including the governance of the Internet to set out a common position to uphold in international fora, including on issues such as internet standards and protocols (...)	This proposal, which covers governance and digital diplomacy, should be discussed as part of the conclusions on digital diplomacy. This proposal also carries a risk: EU action is regularly criticised for contributing to the fragmentation of Internet governance (RGPD, NIS2, etc.). The primary objective is to ensure greater involvement of the EU and the Member

First compromise proposal st 7619/24	Drafting Suggestions	Comments
<u>impact from European research and innovation activities and using standardisation as an international scaling platform for European values and innovations.</u>		States in the bodies, rather than working on a strategy based on the multi-stakeholder model.
	40. EMPHASISES the need to develop an inclusive and multistakeholder governance for AI to ensure the safe development and use of AI for EU citizens	
	End	End