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CONTRIBUTION

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Working Party on Telecommunications and Information Society
Subject:	International Digital Strategy : CY comments

Delegations will find in annex CY comments to the Joint Communication on an International Digital Strategy.

International Digital Strategy – CY

Guiding Question 1

- With regard to expanding international partnerships, Cyprus considers that strengthening existing partnerships, as well as, forging new mutually beneficial partnerships is a stepping stone to protecting and promoting the EU's strategic interests, and most importantly working towards a more digitally sovereign EU.
- Expanding the EU's global tech footprint, whilst adhering to the rules-based global digital order, necessitates working closely with the international private sector. To that end CY welcomes a stronger facilitator role by the D4D Hub and the EU4Digital initiatives.
- Finally, CY is pleased to see the continued commitment on shaping a global digital order that is open, secure, and aligned with EU values.

Guiding Question 2

- CY believes that in order to effectively realize the ambitions of the EU's International Digital Strategy, it is critical to prioritize strategic, long-term partnerships that address mutual interests and shared digital challenges.
- Regions characterized by rapidly expanding digital economies and growing geopolitical significance present some of the most promising opportunities to broaden and deepen these partnerships. This is of particular significance at a time where our adversaries utilize all means in their possession to exert their influence.
- The Strategy rightly identifies such regions as focal points for advancing the EU's external digital agenda. Key initiatives underpinning this effort include the EU-Latin America and Caribbean Digital Alliance, the Africa - EU Partnership and Digital Partnerships with Asian states.

Guiding Question 4

- CY echoes the Strategy's acknowledgment that technologies are transforming the security and defence landscape and support the intention to phase out dependencies by promoting the design, development, manufacturing, and delivery of such technologies.
- With regards to the external dimension, CY expresses reservations with the statement on page 4 of the Strategy "The EU will keep seeking cooperation – not only with long-time like-minded partners, but with any country with which we share common objectives.". This statement raises questions as to what the criteria for the selection of partners would be.
- CY emphasizes that selection of partnerships should be made following a thorough assessment and always in consideration of contributions stemming from reports (such as that of EU Intelligence and Situation Centre (EU INTCEN)).

- To that end, CY believes that the association of states to key EU programmes, such as the Horizon Europe and the Digital Europe Programme should be subject to strict conditions, with an explicit assessment of compatibility with the EU's fundamental principles.

Guiding Question 5

- CY believes that in light of the ever-evolving technological advancements, and the transition towards Web 4.0, a stronger emphasis on cybersecurity and digital resilience is critical, especially in advocating for global standards on cybersecurity, trustworthiness of digital infrastructure and resilience against hybrid threats.
- CY believes that the EU should continue engaging with the international fora such as the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names (ICANN) and the UN's Global Digital Compact (GDC) process.