

GERMAN EU COUNCIL PRESIDENCY DIGITAL PRIORITIES



**“OUR AIM
IS DIGITAL
SOVEREIGNTY”**

*Angela Merkel,
Federal Chancellor of Germany*

With the digital transformation of the economy and society, digital policies are no longer just a matter of tech. In fact, recently, the term “digital sovereignty” has dominated headlines. In Germany’s EU Council Presidency program, digital sovereignty is highlighted as the key to the EU’s global competitiveness and political sovereignty in the medium-term.

Berlin makes it clear: For a stronger and more innovative Europe, digital sovereignty needs to be an overarching principle

- for tech and data policies;
- for policies strengthening European industry and its competitiveness;
- for a sustainable financial architecture in Europe.

**First on Germany’s to-do list:
Reaching a common understand-
ing among the EU Member States
on the definition of and the path
to increased digital sovereignty.**



PRIORITIES

DIGITAL CAPACITIES & KEY TECHNOLOGIES

- **Monitor:** Introducing a continuous monitoring mechanism of European digital capacities (e.g. on AI and quantum computing)
- **Invest:** Boosting public and private investment to build digital capacity, e.g. via the structural policy reform
- **Regulate:** Promotion of common European standards and norms that shall accompany the development of new technologies
- **Protect:** AI development and use shall be oriented towards the common good and based on democratic principles

INFRASTRUCTURE

- **Create:** A high-performance, trusted, sovereign and resilient European data infrastructure "GAIA-X" should be the central project of the "Cloud Federation" at a European level and beyond
- **Secure:** Discuss the effects of crises on network and broadband capacity among Member States
- **Fund:** European state aid law should benefit the building of broadband and mobile networks

DATA POLICIES

- **Boost Access & Usage:** Discussing on governance of common European data spaces (more info in the **blue box**) and high-value datasets
- **Protect Identities:** Standardized secure elements on smart devices shall enable secure data storage, free from third-party access

- **Educate:** Discussing and adopting conclusions on the Commission's action plan on digital literacy, while respecting the principle of subsidiarity
- **Prevent & Protect:** Promoting voluntary and interoperable EU-wide tracing and warning apps in compliance with both data protection laws and high IT security standards

COMPETITIVENESS

- **Reform:** Merger control proceedings should consider the global competitiveness of Europe. Competition law-abuse controls should include platform markets
- **Upgrade:** European state aid law should ensure conditions for fair competition and support the implementation of the European Green Deal
- **Invest:** EU structural policy should focus on investments in digitisation, AI, innovative energy technologies and human capital

CONSUMERS & SOCIAL JUSTICE IN THE DIGITAL ECONOMY

- **Safeguard:** Liability and safety rules for the platform economy, digital services, and consumer protection should be strengthened¹
- **Just taxing:** Implement the OECD's findings on both taxation of the digital economy and effective global minimum taxation

SOVEREIGN EUROPEAN FINANCIAL MARKETS

- **Leverage:** Deepening of the capital market union should enable competitiveness-related investments
- **Open Up:** By creating a digital financial market union, Germany wants to remove existing barriers to cross-border digital financial services in order to remain internationally competitive
- **Digitize:** A legislative proposal on crypto-assets is expected; this would contribute to the sovereignty of the European financial market. The long-term objective: the digital Euro

THE CORONA-CONTEXT

Healthcare policy has been put in the spotlight through the COVID-19 crisis and the public's attitude towards health data is changing significantly. The health sector will probably be the first in the European Union to herald the new European data age. Speed is of the essence here in order not to miss the opportunity.

- Under German leadership, the Council will develop a Code of Conduct on the GDPR-compliant use of health data.

Expected spillover effects: agricultural sector, transport sector, circular economy

¹ Work on the forthcoming Digital Services Act with the aim of improving the legal framework for digital services will be further promoted by the German EU Council Presidency.



DIGITAL POLICY EVENTS

02 July 2020

Art Shapes Industry. Empathetic AI – Creative Economies as a key driver for innovation and impact

[Online](#)

07 July 2020

Pluralism and Responsibility: Media in a Digital Society

[Online](#)

07–08 September 2020

European Competition Day

[Berlin, Germany](#)

15 September 2020

Political-Strategic Dialogue: Armed Forces in the Digital Age

[Brussels, Belgium](#)

23 September 2020

The Future is Smart: International and digital considerations for the vocational schools of tomorrow

[Osnabrück, Germany](#)

24 September 2020

Competitiveness Council: Internal Market/ Industry

[Brussels, Belgium](#)

25 September 2020

Competitiveness Council: Research and Innovation

[Brussels, Belgium](#)

09–11 September 2020

Meeting of the European Research Area and Innovation Committee

[Online](#)

05–06 October 2020

Moving Target Digitalisation: Rethinking Global Exchange in Higher Education

[Potsdam, Germany](#)

15 October 2020

Informal Meeting of Ministers for Telecommunications & Digital Affairs

[Baden-Baden, Germany](#)

October 2020

High-Level Conference: Artificial Intelligence and Ethics of Digitalisation

[Baden-Baden, Germany](#)

21–22 October 2020

Ministerial Conference: European Research Area

[Lübeck, Germany](#)

21–22 October 2020

Senior Labour Inspectors' Committee: Labour Inspection in a Changing World of Work, with digitalisation as a driver

[Dortmund, Germany](#)

22–23 October 2020

Informal Meeting of Competitiveness Ministers (internal market, industry)

[Königswinter, Germany](#)

26–27 October 2020

Trust in AI: Responsible AI for Science and Society

[Kaiserslautern, Germany](#)

26–28 October 2020

Industrial Technologies 2020: Transition to Sustainable Prosperity

[Mainz, Germany](#)

02–03 November 2020

Informal Meeting of the Ministers for Consumer Protection

[Berlin, Germany](#)

10 November 2020

CODE 2020: Cyber Security and the Challenge of European Digital Sovereignty

[Munich, Germany](#)

10–11 November 2020

European Cluster Conference 2020: Providing Support in Operating European Supply and Value Chains with a View to Sustainability and Digitisation

[Berlin, Germany](#)

11 November 2020

Digital Health 2020: EU on the Move

[Berlin, Germany](#)

17 November 2020

Open Data for Smart Mobility in Europe: Data-Based Mobility Innovations

[Leipzig, Germany](#)

19 November 2020

Competitiveness Council: Internal Market/ Industry

[Brussels, Belgium](#)

23–24 November 2020

Defence CIO Council: Promotion of Cyber Defence Capabilities and the Digital Transformation

[Cologne, Germany](#)

27 November 2020

Competitiveness Council: Research and Innovation

[Brussels, Belgium](#)

01–07 November 2020

Young Talent Academy: Quantum Future Academy Europe – Today's Insights for Tomorrow's Experts

[Berlin, Germany](#)

01–03 December 2020

ICT 2020: Leading the Digital Age

[Cologne, Germany](#)

UNDERSTANDING POLITICS - ENVISIONING THE FUTURE

ANALYSIS, STRATEGY POSITIONING