

WESTERN BALKANS DIGITAL SUMMIT 2019, BELGRADE

CONCLUDING STATEMENT

At the Digital Summit in Skopje in April 2018, we stated our shared ambition to use digital connectivity to foster economic development, to offer more opportunities for our citizens through strengthened regional cooperation and commitment to engage in concrete regional initiatives in digital skills, trust and security, digital connectivity, and digital economy and society, and to make the Western Balkans region more attractive to investors.

The Statement of Support for the Digital Agenda for the Western Balkans which we signed during the Sofia Summit puts forward a clear vision for the digital transformation of the Western Balkans.

We progressed working together and now witness the progress made since the last Digital Summit, (see Annex 1). We share the same enthusiasm and ambition to speed up the processes in support of the Region's digital transformation.

Gathered in Belgrade for the Digital Summit, we have agreed the following statement:

- We welcome the signing of the new **all-inclusive Western Balkan Roaming Agreement** which provides a very clear signal to the citizens and businesses of the region that the Digital Agenda for the Western Balkans can deliver clear and measurable benefits, and opens way for EU – Western Balkan roaming reduction.
- We will work together to embark upon the **mutual recognition process for trusted services**, complete the assessment for establishing the platform for the recognition of certificates with e-signature within the region, in full compliance with the Electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions in the internal market Regulation (eIDAS regulation) within 2020 and advance with the implementation during 2021. We encourage the acceleration of harmonization of the legislation with eIDAS regulation and upgrading of the registries for trusted services.
- We will engage in actions to build the resilience to cyber-attacks and step up the region's cybersecurity capacity through maintaining regional dialogue among the Western Balkan Computer Security Incident Response Teams (CSIRTs) and ensuring regular exchange of information on cyber incidents. We commit to establish the **regional platform for exchange of information between the Western Balkans** by the Poznan Summit and make it fully operational by the end of 2019.
- We are eager to cooperate with **ENISA, the European Union Agency for Cybersecurity** and participate in its work where this may become compatible with its new mandate.
- We recognise the need to increase capacities of public administration at large as well as of critical infrastructure and civil society in the area of cyber security. In an effort to make the WB a more cyber incident proof region, we will work to identify by Poznan Summit the best model to mobilise and share training resources.
- We will further support the deployment of high capacity digital networks and work towards achieving a gigabit society, including the establishment of **Broadband Competence Offices (BCO)** in our economies and by actively participating in the knowledge sharing activities of the EU BCO network.

- We acknowledge the importance of **digital skills** to support regional digital transformation and the role of women in ICT, and welcome regional initiatives that lead toward improving digital skills for women. We will promote the Declaration on Gender-Balanced Company Culture throughout the Western Balkans and participation in the **EU Network for Women in Digital**.
- We will make the best efforts to submit properly developed proposals to the future rounds of the **Western Balkans Investment Framework**. Since 2018, € 30 million of EU funding is available for technical assistance grants in digital infrastructure sector. We call for progressive opening of the WBIF for digital connectivity investments to support projects with lower commercial viability in the next financial perspective. We also welcome the new Western Balkan Guarantee instrument, which should address market gaps in the digital sector as well.
- The modernisation of the Public Administrations is a key element for successful digitalisation. We endorse the **Declaration on eGovernment** signed in Tallinn on 6 October 2017, which further accelerates the implementation of the principles set out in the **EU eGovernment action plan 2016-2020 and the European Interoperability Framework (EIF)**. We will take concrete steps aimed at making use of the EU Digital Service Infrastructure and joining **ISA²** programme.
- We encourage stakeholders from the Western Balkans to participate in activities of the **European Artificial Intelligence Alliance** and the **EU Blockchain Observatory & Forum**.
- We note the potential of the 22 **Digital Innovation Hubs** (DIHs) present or planned in the Western Balkans to help companies become more competitive with regard to their business/production processes, products or services using digital technologies. We commit to invest in the capacity building of the DIHs in the Western Balkans and to support collaboration with DIHs across EU.
- We will encourage our primary and secondary schools to get involved in **EU Code Week** 2019, taking place from 5-20 October 2019. EU Code Week is a grassroots movement that aims to bring programming and related technology skills to people of all ages, especially children in primary and secondary schools. We commit to intensify our efforts to ensure that by 2020 students in at least 50% of all schools in the Western Balkans have an understanding of coding and the development of crucial competences related to computational thinking, such as problem solving, collaboration and analytical skills.
- We are committed to work toward the development of digital skills strategies, including programmes for closing the gender gap and boosting employability, inspired by the **EU Digital Education Action Plan**, which aims to support the adaptation of education systems in the Union to the ongoing digital transformation.
- We note the potential of data, as a key element towards fostering a **Data economy** (Big Data, Open Data and Open Government) and support an open data region, and commit to improve the quality of open data portals through regional cooperation and exchange of best practices, including a common data format, and observing data interoperability standards.
- We look forward to holding the first **EU–Western Balkan ICT Dialogue** in July 2019, together with the services of the European Commission, in order to deepen our understanding of the impact of the Digital Single Market in the Western Balkans.

- We will undertake actions to raise awareness and increase participation of companies and students in the **Digital Opportunity Traineeships Initiative**, which gives students and recent graduates an opportunity to acquire hands-on training in digital fields such as cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, coding or digital marketing.
- To contribute to the data-driven innovation, competitiveness and cohesion of the region, we commit to align with the **European Cloud Initiative** which allows science, industry and public authorities seamless access to services and the possibility to move, share and re-use data across the region, and among public institutions and research disciplines.
- We commit to establish sound processes to monitor digital transformation and progress towards compliance with the EU *acquis* for electronic communications and information society, as well as convergence with the Digital Single Market. In the framework of MAP REA, we will work toward setting a commonly agreed baseline and monitoring progress in the main areas of the digital transformation, including through the collection of data to benchmark Western Balkans economies using the Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI).
- We call upon the European Union to support our efforts within the EU enlargement process, particularly in the context of the Multi-beneficiary Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) towards Digital Integration goals and to benefit from its role as a platform for regional interaction with donors and international institutions engaged in the Western Balkans.
- We recognize the importance of coordinating closely with a wider European Digital Society, and the potential of the Digital Agenda for contributing to EU integration.
- We invite the European Commission, the Regional Cooperation Council, and other international partners to continue supporting the implementation of this agenda, by means of political, financial and technical assistance.
- We congratulate Albania as the next Host of the Digital Summit and remain committed to duly implement all commitments specified herein and report progress at the next Summit.

Belgrade, 4 April 2019