

Digitising European industry

2016/2271(INI) - 01/06/2017 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 571 votes to 32, with 35 abstentions, a resolution on digitising European industry, following the Commission's communication on this subject.

Developing an integrated Industrial Digitalisation Strategy for the EU: Members welcomed the Commission's communication on digitising European industry, and strongly believed that such a strategy is of critical importance in contributing to solving Europe's most pressing economic and societal challenges. Such a strategy would, notably:

- strengthen economic dynamic, social and territorial cohesion;
- foster quality job creation and reshoring opportunities, by improving working standards and the attractiveness of industrial sector jobs;
- strengthen European cohesion through a reliable and ambitious European investment policy;
- support Europe's goals in climate policy by reducing emissions and energy consumption;
- strengthen economic, policy and social innovation through the principles of openness and accessibility of public and private data;
- attract investment and leading researchers and expertise at world level, thus contributing to economic growth and European competitiveness;
- support new business models and innovative start-ups;
- solve some of the most pressing challenges in the transport and tourism sectors.

Parliament recommended:

- putting in place a **competitive business environment that facilitates private investment**, a build-up of state-of-the-art European digital infrastructure, and an EU coordination structure for the digitisation of industry;
- accelerating digitisation particularly in those Member States, regions and sectors that are lagging behind and among those people who are affected by the **digital divide**;
- ensuring uninterrupted and high-performance connectivity for main transport paths and hubs no later than **2025** and to initiate full coverage all over the EU.

Creating conditions for successful industrial digitisation (infrastructure, investment, innovation and skills): Members felt an integrated industrial digitisation must be based on strong enabling conditions ranging from a first-rate, future-proof digital infrastructure, research and development and an investment-supportive environment to an appropriate innovation-nudging legislative framework.

Parliament stressed the need to:

- advance public and private investment in high-speed connectivity, for example through **5G**, fibre optics, navigation and satellite communications infrastructure;
- **harmonise spectrum allocation**, aimed at increasing demand for connectivity and enhancing the predictability of the network investment environment;
- establish **leadership** in key technologies such as 5G, high-performance computing, artificial intelligence, cloud computing, big data analytics, the Internet of Things (IoT), and robotics;
- ensure that new forms of work must **not be used to circumvent existing labour and social legislation** as regards the protection of workers' and consumer rights.

Particular attention should be given to the specific problems encountered by **SME's**. Furthermore, the European Fund for Strategic Investment (EFSI) should be better used.

Advancing the digitisation of businesses: Parliament called on the Commission to increase the proportion of Horizon 2020 research projects generating patents and intellectual property rights and to report thereon.

It stressed the need to:

- **safeguard sensitive European technologies** and know-how: Members highlighted the potential risks in regard to strategic state and industrial policy-driven foreign direct investment (FDI), particularly by state-owned enterprises by means of mergers and acquisitions;
- clarify the safety and liability rules for **autonomously acting systems**, including the conditions for testing with regard to automation, robotics and the application of artificial intelligence in production;
- adopt a common European **cybersecurity** approach, particularly the need to advance cybersecurity for the internet of things;
- strengthen the role that the governing bodies referred to in the Directive on **network security** (NIS Directive) have in establishing trust in future technologies
- establish a framework that ensures the **free flow of data** whilst protecting the ownership of data;
- monitor the adoption and coherent implementation of the **European Cloud Initiative** in order to enable the fair, swift, trustworthy and seamless flow and use of data;
- set out clear rules regarding **data management** in the framework of contractual relations between businesses ;
- establish a strong **standardisation** strategy, including interoperability in the digital domain.

The social dimension (skills, education and social innovation): Parliament is called upon to adequately assess **the social effects** of industrial digitisation and, as appropriate, to propose further measures to close the digital divide.

A digitisation strategy for businesses should give a strong social dimension, including the right to training and the implementation of a skills guarantee, and lifelong learning, as well as the integration of digital skills into national education curricula. Employers should make use of the **European Social Fund** for such training.

All Member States should develop comprehensive national digital skills strategies with targets.

Lastly, the resolution emphasised the importance of investing in the digitisation of **vocational training** and the skilled crafts sector. Digital skills also need to be combined with engineering skills and the promotion of education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.