

Digital Europe programme 2021–2027

2018/0227(COD) - 06/06/2018 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to establish a digital Europe programme for the period 2021-2027.

PROPOSED ACT: Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: the European Parliament decides in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure and on an equal footing with the Council.

BACKGROUND: the [digital single market strategy](#) established a robust framework which must now be matched with an equally ambitious **investment programme** to increase the EU's international competitiveness, as well as to develop and strengthen Europe's strategic digital capacities.

European Heads of State and Government identified the main pillars of a strong digital economy: cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, a world class infrastructure that includes high performance computing, digital skills, and the digital transformation of the public sector.

In its [resolution](#) of 1 June 2017 on the digitising European industry, the European Parliament highlighted the importance of a common European cybersecurity approach, recognising the need to raise awareness and considered cyber-resilience as a crucial responsibility for business leaders and national and European industrial security policymakers.

The digital Europe programme is a central element of the Commission's comprehensive response to the challenge of digital transformation, part of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) proposal for 2021-2027.

CONTENT: the proposal for a Regulation - presented for a Union of 27 Member States - seeks to establish the **digital Europe programme**. It lays down the objectives of the programme, the budget for the period 2021 - 2027, the forms of European Union funding and the rules for providing such funding.

The overall objective of the proposed programme is to support the digital transformation of the European economy and society and bring its benefits to European citizens and businesses. It shall **reinforce Europe's capacities in key digital technology areas** through large-scale deployment and widen their diffusion and uptake in areas of public interest and the private sector.

The programme has five specific objectives:

1. high-performance computing: funding aims to build-up and strengthen the EU's high performance computing (HPC) and data processing capacities, and ensure their wide use both in areas of public interest such as health, environment and security, and by industry, notably SMEs.

At EU level, in March 2017, 29 countries engaged to cooperate on connected mobility, and 16 Member States have committed so far to work together and with the Commission to **acquire and deploy an integrated world-class high performance computing infrastructure**. In January 2018, the Commission proposed a Council Regulation to establish the European High Performance Computing Joint Undertaking '[EuroHPC](#)'. The **continuation of the Joint Undertaking** is deemed to be the most effective instrument to implement the objectives of the EuroHPC initiative, in particular to coordinate national and European Union strategies and investments in high performance computing infrastructure and R&D;

2. cybersecurity: the programme shall contribute to the protection of the EU digital economy, society and democracies by promoting the EU cyber defence and cyber security industry, financing advanced cyber security equipment and infrastructure, and supporting the development of the necessary skills and knowledge.

3. artificial intelligence: the aim is to build-up and reinforce core artificial intelligence (AI) capacities such as a data resources and libraries of artificial intelligence algorithms and make them accessible to all businesses and public administrations, as well as reinforce and foster links between existing artificial intelligence testing and experimentation facilities in Member States;

4. advanced digital skills: the programme shall ensure that the current and future labour force can easily acquire advanced digital skills, notably in high performance computing, artificial intelligence and cybersecurity, by offering students, graduates, and existing workers the means to acquire and develop these skills, no matter where they are situated;

5. deployment, better use of digital capacities and interoperability: the objective is to expand the best use of digital capacities, notably high performance computing, artificial intelligence and cybersecurity, across the economy, in areas of public interest and society, including the deployment of interoperable solutions in areas of public interest and facilitate access to technology and knowhow for all businesses, notably SMEs.

Digital innovation hubs: the proposal foresees a central role for digital innovation hubs in the implementation of the programme. A network of digital innovation hubs shall ensure the widest geographical coverage across Europe.

The digital innovation hubs shall serve as access points to the latest digital capacities, including high performance computing (HPC), artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, as well as other innovative technologies such as key enabling technologies, also available also in fablabs or citylabs. They shall act as **single-entry points** in accessing tested and validated technologies and promote open innovation.

Proposed budget: the financial envelope for the programme is set at **EUR 9.2 billion** in current prices for the period 2021-2027, its indicative distribution shall be as follows:

- high performance computing: up to EUR 2.7 billion;
- cybersecurity: up to EUR 2.5 billion;
- artificial intelligence: up to EUR 2 billion;
- advanced digital skills: up to EUR 700 million;
- digital capacity utilisation and interoperability: up to EUR 1.3 billion.