

International digital strategy for the EU

In this period of accelerating geopolitical tensions, the EU stands at a critical juncture, facing increasing global competition and sharply divergent views from some countries, which sometimes challenge the EU's approach to digital regulation. To assert its position as a consistent, predictable and reliable partner, the EU has defined objectives for future digital cooperation in its international digital strategy, published on 5 June 2025.

Background

The strategy comes at a particularly challenging time for the EU. The geopolitical landscape is evolving quickly on several fronts: the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, transatlantic tensions, trade disputes with China, and conflict in the Middle East. New [digital technologies](#) are increasingly central to geopolitical competition and a barometer of global influence, and are sometimes used to threaten the security and integrity of the EU.

The EU has recently adopted several digital regulations with global impact, such as the Digital Services Act (DSA), the Digital Market Act (DMA) and the Artificial Intelligence Act (AI Act), to promote a safe and transparent online environment. These regulations could lead to a phenomenon Columbia Law School professor [Anu Bradford](#) calls 'the Brussels effect', where other countries follow the example of EU regulations. However, EU digital regulation has encountered criticism from the US administration, big tech companies and others, who argue that they are overly restrictive and stifle innovation. This criticism is not limited to the US. Chinese social media and shopping platforms such as [TikTok](#) and [Temu](#) have also disagreed with the European Commission regarding their compliance with the DSA. Several ongoing EU-China trade disputes recently culminated in the [cancellation](#) of the EU-China high-level economic and trade dialogue, which was supposed to lay the groundwork for the [EU-China Summit](#) scheduled to take place on 24-25 July 2025.

In this context, the EU is trying to deepen and extend its cooperation with countries such as India, Japan, Singapore, Canada and the Republic of Korea. The EU's relationship with these countries will be essential in shaping the global digital space and promoting EU values across the globe.

Joint communication on the international digital strategy for the EU

The European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy published a [joint communication](#) on the international digital strategy for the EU on 5 June 2025. This follows-up on previous [Council conclusions](#) on EU digital diplomacy. The strategy emphasises the EU's strengths as a reliable and predictable partner supporting a rules-based global order aligned with values such as democracy, rule of law and fundamental rights. It sets three objectives:

- enhancing the EU's tech competitiveness through economic and business cooperation,
- promoting a high level of security for the EU and its partners,
- promoting EU values in global digital governance and digital standards.

In the past, the EU has developed regional and bilateral cooperation with partners through various mechanisms. These include Trade and Technology Councils (TTCs) with the [US](#) and [India](#); [digital partnerships](#) with Canada, Singapore, the Republic of Korea and Japan; digital dialogues; association of partner countries to EU programmes; initiatives such as the new pact for the Mediterranean; free trade agreements with countries like the United Kingdom; and digital trade agreements with Singapore and the Republic of Korea. Today, the EU plans to scale its global network of partners across four dimensions:

- deepen existing digital partnerships and dialogues,



- broaden the cooperation network by establishing new digital partnerships and dialogues and by signing more digital trade agreements,
- connect partnerships as a digital partnership network,
- strengthen security and defence partnerships regarding digital issues.

The strategy pays little attention to cooperation with the US. It merely mentions the EU-US cyber dialogues and cooperation on Arctic connectivity in the [annex](#) but does not refer to any additional EU-US TTC meetings. According to Commissioner for Tech Sovereignty, Security and Democracy [Henna Virkkunen](#), the EU currently prioritises trade negotiations with the US. The strategy barely mentions China, and then mostly in the context of online product safety. However, [Commissioner Virkkunen](#) has said that digital cooperation would be discussed during the EU-China Summit on 24-25 July 2025.

The strategy recognises the importance of investing in digital infrastructure and improving digital connectivity, including initiatives such as the Global Gateway. The EU plans to develop an integrated tech business offer, which will include technology solutions (such as software solutions), capacity-building measures and measures to address the global talent gap. The tech business offer will be managed jointly by the EU and Member States in a 'Tech Team Europe' approach that aims to ensure broad representation and close coordination.

The strategy outlines priority areas for cooperation, such as secure and trusted digital infrastructure, emerging technologies, cybersecurity, foreign information manipulation and interference, digital identities and digital public infrastructure, and online platforms. The EU will cooperate with Japan, the Republic of Korea and Canada on quantum technologies, for example, and collaborate with India on talent exchanges and semiconductor expertise. The EU will also help partner countries to develop computing infrastructure, trust services and digital identity solutions.

Affirming the EU's commitment to a multilateral and multi-stakeholder approach, the strategy opposes state-controlled internet architectures. Digital partnerships and dialogues enable the EU to coordinate its position with partner countries ahead of discussions in international fora and organisations such as the United Nations, the G7, the G20, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Council of Europe.

Parliament's views

The European Parliament has highlighted the need for enhanced collaboration on digital issues with several countries. In its April 2025 [resolution](#), it urged the Commission to use the Global Gateway as a sustainable alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative, increasing the EU's presence and visibility worldwide.

Parliament is currently developing an [own-initiative report](#) on European technological sovereignty and digital infrastructure. The Committee on Industry, Research and Energy adopted this report on 3 June 2025, with a [compromise amendment](#) tabled by several groups (the European People's Party, Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats, Renew and Greens/European Free Alliance). The amendment urges the Commission to negotiate solutions to several issues, such as resolving the US ban on AI chip exports to 16 Member States. It also encourages the Commission to negotiate digital trade agreements with additional partner countries and step up technical cooperation in multilateral fora, aiming inter alia to prevent the introduction of [customs duties on electronic transmissions](#) (digital tariffs). The report awaits Parliament's vote in plenary.

Stakeholders' views

The [European Tech Alliance](#) (EUTA) welcomed the new strategy but called for the political commitments made in the strategy to be translated into concrete measures. [Digital Europe](#) encouraged increasing stakeholder engagement in the EU's foreign policy and digital dialogues. Spanish multinational telecommunications company [Telefónica](#) also emphasised the need for European industry-driven leadership in standards development.

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