



“*Plat*FORM THE FUTURE.”

Dortmund Declaration for the 2019 Digital Summit

The 2019 Digital Summit once again highlights the fact that digitisation is not restricted to some individual sectors. It affects citizens, business, the science community and society alike and at a very profound level. Companies are adjusting their business models or replacing them with new ones. The ways in which we access information, communicate with one another and consume are all changing. Government and the public administration are going digital. Citizens are reorganising themselves online.

A key role in this process of transformation is played by digital platforms. These act as interfaces between markets, industries and stakeholders, providing tremendous potential for scaling, greater market transparency, more choice and lower search and transaction costs. In other words, they come with significant benefits for all sides and open up major economic potential and new opportunities for society.

Germany can turn itself into one of the main beneficiaries of the platform economy – especially as it already is one of the leading suppliers for the industrial sector. We need a regulatory framework that strengthens the European single market and safeguards the principle of freedom to conduct a business.

If we want to harness the platform economy’s full potential, build on our success and secure an adequate portion of the value created by the platform economy, we must create reliable rules and regulations for all stakeholders in a way that protects their freedom to conduct a business. We must therefore aim to create innovative digital platforms here in Germany and Europe. Platforms that are able to grow and compete across the world.

1. Digital sovereignty is an enabler for platforms ‘Made in Europe’

The Digital Summit sees providing citizens, industry and the public sector with comprehensive control over their data and with access to secure cloud solutions as crucial prerequisites for platforms ‘Made in Europe’.

The quantity and quality of accessible data will only rise if digital identities become more secure and if trusted data sharing mechanisms are fostered. The potential inherent in AI, for instance, will only be harnessed for new business models and products if the necessary training data is made available. Data sharing, pooling and processing depend on a forward-looking environment that is open for innovation, and on entrepreneurial boldness. A competitive data and platform economy will depend on possibilities for sharing and processing data stocks in line with regulations and data protection rules, especially anonymised data.

At the same time, the European Commission and the Member States must lead by example in the way they handle and protect the data of citizens, business, and the public administration. Together with business, the European Member States can help establish European multi-cloud solutions so that digital platforms ‘Made in Europe’ can make use of these.

Data sovereignty and data availability are the two core aspects for productive and innovative value creation in Europe. They are also the key requirements at the centre of the project to establish a secure and trusted European digital infrastructure.

2. Expanding the gigabit network to make it a basis for the platform economy

A German platform economy that is able to compete successfully will have to be based on high-performing gigabit networks. The telecommunications industry and the Federal Government are forging ahead with the expansion and have launched an ambitious programme to this effect.

The network providers will continue to support the gigabit targets for 2025 by investing billions into the networks. The Federal Government is providing funding for regions in which the private sector is not creating gigabit networks by 2025. The latest spectrum auctions also marked the beginning of the new high-performance 5G networks; some cities are already providing 5G services. It is likely that, by the end of 2020, at least the 20 largest German cities will be ready for 5G services. The spectrums auctioned came with clear supply requirements attached, which is to much improve mobile service coverage in Germany.

The Federal Government will continue to rigorously support the expansion of landline and mobile networks by the private sector, and will do so by creating a pro-investment framework complete with a level playing field and eased bureaucracy. Applications and approval procedures will also be streamlined and expedited. For landlines, this will entail a better investment climate for gigabit networks and the use of cost-efficient cable-laying methods. The Federal Government will be tabling a mobile services strategy. The aim of this strategy will be to tangibly improve mobile services in Germany. This includes rolling out 4G to the areas where it is still not available, speeding up the expansion of the networks, and making Germany one of the leading markets for 5G services. Furthermore, consent and approval processes are to be digitised, which will also help with expanding landlines and mobile services.

3. A framework for innovation and fair competition

The platform economy is based on new business models that are given room to develop and thrive. These need a framework that particularly facilitates the emergence of services and solutions designed to make citizens' and companies' everyday tasks easier. This in turn includes better access to financing during companies' growth phase. A successful platform economy will be based on technical independence and interoperability, the principle of control over one's data, data security, fair and consumer-friendly terms and conditions, and on European values overall.

We need a market and a competitive framework that provides for equal treatment for all things equal and unequal treatment for things unequal and which differentiates accordingly between Business to Consumer (B2C), business to business (B2B), Government to Citizen (G2C), and Peer to Peer (P2P) models. This framework must ringfence a European digital single market that affords guaranteed protection of privacy, consumer rights and transparency, that is governed by fair competition, and that promotes innovation. Fair competition also means that all suppliers within the EU are bound by the existing legal framework and enforce it. We want to use the amendment of the Act against Restraints of Competition to foster innovation and free market access, particularly for startups and SMEs. The burden on SMEs is to be eased and they are to be given greater legal certainty so that they can harness the potential of digitisation.

Work 4.0 must come with clearly defined labour rights and with clearly defined responsibilities on the part of clients and platforms. Greater flexibility must go hand in hand with greater protection. The strength of our European social model is rooted in the 'social partnership', in which working and employment conditions are negotiated between employers and employees. The same also applies in the platform economy. We want to create a national and a European framework for decent work in the platform economy.

Digital platforms are also a space for individual learning that can happen anywhere and at any time. We are initiating and promoting educational platforms for digital governance in schools and also for teaching and learning about AI.

Our democracy also depends on our ability to protect media diversity and diversity of creative content in the long run. We also want our citizens and businesses to have easy and secure electronic access to public services.

A successful development of digital platforms is a key element of the digital transformation. Venturing into the platform economy is a leap that requires entrepreneurial boldness, long-term political vision, and a public debate on all aspects that are relevant to this issue.

Let us seize this opportunity and shape our future in Germany and Europe: *Plat*FORM THE FUTURE.