

# D9+ meeting in Prague

## Chair's Summary

On the 29<sup>th</sup> of March 2022, the like-minded group of ministers from digitally advanced EU countries, the so-called "D9+", met in Prague, in the Czech Republic, to discuss transatlantic relations in digital economy.

The ministerial debate stressed the necessity to foster the EU-US cooperation in digital economy and society. It was agreed on that strong transatlantic relations are crucial to address our most pressing strategic challenges. Russian aggression on Ukraine strongly resonated during the whole meeting and delegations emphasized **the importance of building transatlantic ties based on mutual respect to fundamental rights and shared democratic values** while creating predictable, transparent and innovative-friendly environment for digital cooperation. There is a joint responsibility to implement international tools to help the Ukrainian economy and society to recover. The EU and the US should together participate in these actions.

The heads of delegations agreed that our shared values and principles make the EU and the US natural partners on key issues around the digital economy and commit them to further cooperation in this area. The establishment of **the EU-US Trade and Technology Council (TTC)** is therefore a welcomed new platform that can facilitate and foster the EU-US bilateral cooperation. Through working groups focusing on specific areas, TTC can play a fundamental role in coordinating approaches to key global trade, economic and technology challenges. Above the TTC, D9+ countries should also coordinate their approaches and promote the main ideas within other international platforms, such as WTO and OECD.

In addition, participants expressed their support for **the involvement of stakeholders** to discuss the possible areas for digital cooperation between the EU and the US. Ministers recognized the need and the importance to include the views of entrepreneurs including those from SMEs and start-ups while creating a framework and setting priorities for the EU-US cooperation. Business representatives can help us to identify opportunities, gaps, shared solutions in furthering trusted innovation and deepening digital capabilities. Their views can help us find the balance between regulation and the innovation and the TTC is a great forum for the public-private collaboration to foster innovation- and business-friendly ecosystem.

Given the current geopolitical situation, the participants highlighted that **the cybersecurity should be on top of our priorities**. We understand that we need more investments in digital infrastructure in order to strengthen our resilience. Moreover, there is a need to concentrate on **the development and standardization of 6G in the EU**.

Nowadays we face unprecedented amount of **information manipulation** that need to be addressed. To this end, the European Commission gave a reflection on the adoption of the Code of Practice on Disinformation, the first worldwide self-regulatory standard to fight disinformation agreed by the online platforms, leading social networks, advertisers and advertising industry. As a good example, the Czech Republic presented the central European project called Central European Digital Media Observatory (CEDMO). Its objective is interdisciplinary research on disinformation, including detection using the elements of artificial intelligence, strengthening digital and media literacy and the development of fact-checking platforms.

D9+ supports the principle of openness and creation of **global standards build on a human-centric approach**. There is a considerable potential for the development of common technical standards on transatlantic level,

especially for emerging technologies with regard to their potential impact on human rights and democratic values. We value an innovation friendly, bottom-up and stakeholder driven approach in standardization and underline the importance of ensuring that standards are based on WTO principles.

The emphasis was put especially on the common EU-US approach towards **responsible and sustainable digital transition** that ensures that further development in this area is in accordance with our shared democratic values and customer-oriented approach. The ministers also highlighted the importance to shape **global digital governance** of the digital legislative files and capitalize on new opportunities from emerging technologies. When it comes to implementation of EU legislation in digital field, the ministers also mentioned the necessity to have a functioning enforcement mechanism in place. We need to ensure synergy in governance among digital files (DSA, DGA, Data Act, Ai Act etc.) to maximize efficiency of regulation and to minimize the administrative burden. In ensuring good governance and better regulation, the D9+ welcomes the use of innovative forms of governance, such as policy hubs and regulatory sandboxes for example in the field of AI. Since **data flows** underpin most areas of the transatlantic digital cooperation, D9+ countries highly appreciated the agreement in principle that has been found between the EU and the US on flows of personal data. While it is a difficult topic, enhanced cooperation with the US has clear benefits for our businesses and can help setting ambitious and global rules. We hope that this positive momentum will translate into progress at the TTC and in plurilateral negotiations on e-commerce ahead of the next ministerial conference at the WTO.

During the lunch, the ministers have the opportunity to discuss **the eID** use cases with the European Commission. In the discussion, the representatives raised the issue to work on the list of the best practices of digital tools for the citizens which are applied in the D9+ countries.

#### **D9+ countries focus on transatlantic relations in digital cooperation**

*D9+ is a ministerial group of digitally advanced EU countries that promote the utilization, implementation and sharing of best practices of digitalization and digital technologies. Hosted by the Czech Republic, the meeting was attended by Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Ireland, Finland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain and Sweden. Slovakia, Slovenia and the European Commission (DG CONNECT) participated as guests.*