

# Policy Recommendations for a European Tech Agenda

## Europe's opportunity to preserve an enabling environment for innovation and ensure its global competitiveness and security

The Information Technology Industry Council (ITI) is the premier advocate and thought leader for the global technology industry. ITI's membership comprises 70 of the leading technology and innovation companies from all corners of the information and communications technology (ICT) sector, including hardware, software, digital services, semiconductor, network equipment, cybersecurity, and Internet companies.

The technological innovations of ITI's members, and the digitalisation of the economy more broadly, bring innumerable benefits to European industry and society. The tech sector empowers European companies of all sizes and across industries – from agriculture to education, financial services to manufacturing, healthcare to energy and transportation – to leverage frontier innovations towards competition and success in the global marketplace. Whether it is sensors that detect health and safety hazards for workers in real time, or artificial intelligence that allows doctors to analyse complex medical data faster than ever, technology allows us to address some of the most challenging issues of our time and improve the quality of everyday life for Europeans. The tech sector is also already taking significant steps to help prepare the workforce of the future for the shifting skills and competencies that are required in the 21st century.

Tech policy is a crucial priority in the 2019-2024 EU term, one on which Europe has an opportunity to play an international leadership role on policy issues that are increasingly global. ITI and its members believe that building trust and fostering the public interest in the era of digital transformation are essential. Our companies have made great strides in bringing the positive societal benefits of transformative technologies to fruition and remain committed to upholding the fundamental principles of privacy, inclusivity, transparency, and democracy that underpin European society. We believe in the importance of preserving an enabling environment for innovation to ensure Europe's global competitiveness and security. Europe's digital infrastructure is the foundation for that. 5G is a core element to support digital transformations in industry and society, estimated to enable more than €2.2 trillion worth of economic output in Europe by 2030.

ITI has developed recommendations outlining concrete steps that policymakers can take, in partnership with industry, academia, civil society, and other stakeholders, to effectively implement the ambitious agenda for **"Shaping Europe's Digital Future"** launched by the European Commission in February 2020. Our recommendations address the economic and social implications of technology and the role of our industry, in a manner that supports innovation, while recognising the public interests at stake.

Read ITI's full EU Policy Recommendations [here](#).

## Data Governance

### A balanced framework is key to innovation

Digital innovation relies on the availability of large and diverse datasets from the private and the public sectors, enabling technology developers to innovate across industries and meet the needs of individuals and society in unprecedented ways. For example, analysing data and producing customised recommendations based on learning from a large pool of similar cases can revolutionise the delivery of healthcare and facilitate a new wave of personalised modern conveniences for European citizens. Much of this functionality will be built upon insights gleaned from non-personal data sets – that is, data which is anonymised or not directly relatable to a specific individual.

To realise this potential, it is critical to ensure that technology developers are able to access high quality public data sets. Allowing businesses and the general public to reuse data can help boost economic development within the EU as well as transparency within the EU institutions. Open government data is a tremendous resource that is as yet largely untapped. There are many areas where open government data can be of value to many different groups of people and organisations, including EU governments themselves. The benefits of more available open data sets lie in the creation and delivery of new products and services.

In addition, open data can be used to help transform businesses across industry sectors from within as they embrace the digital world. We appreciate the European commission's focus on data governance with the adoption of [Europe's Data Strategy](#) in February 2020, and put forth the below recommendations for the EU to realize its fullest potential by continuing to invest in and prioritizing the institution of effective data governance initiatives, which encourage digital transformation across sectors.

### Our Recommendations

1. **Business-to-business data sharing should remain voluntary.** Voluntary agreements between companies constitute today the main tool for business-to-business data sharing, and several consultations at the EU level in the past few years seem to confirm that there is no demand to create legal obligations in this area. We caution against blanket sharing obligations that would threaten investment in research and could stifle innovation.
2. **Make public data more accessible.** Facilitating a robust government data access and data sharing environment will be critical for the EU in the coming years. The EU should continue to catalyse economic growth through digital transformation by publishing public data under an open license and applying an 'open by default' principle. The EU should also continue to facilitate the removal of other barriers to widespread open data use. These barriers include lack of awareness, lack of knowledge, and poor data quality.
3. **Business-to-government data sharing should be encouraged on a voluntary basis.** We strongly support the claim that requests for the reuse of privately held data by public bodies should be proportionate, balanced and limited to the minimum extent necessary for the performance of their functions, based on a voluntary system.
4. **Opportunities to collect and distribute data responsibly can be created through data-sharing agreements.** The EU should incentivise investment in tools to monitor and improve AI as data is collected and ages, and also play a leading role in collecting data that will improve core supply chain issues such as predictive maintenance and safety. The EU framework has proven that most issues can

be solved by adequate application of existing rules. Interoperability, transparency and non-discrimination should be the key principles for the future.

5. **The EU can encourage global partners to commit to similar efforts to make open data more readily available via dialogue in official forums.** We stand ready to support these efforts towards promoting greater innovations and digital transformation across industry sectors and public institutions.
6. **Data portability should be enhanced.** Considerations related to switching, access to data and portability should take into account specific situations and contexts and avoid a one-size-fits-all approach. IP and trade secrets should be respected and safeguarded. Imposing rigid standards to enable data portability could have unintended consequences by hardwiring the status quo, forestalling innovation, and precluding future portability.
7. **High-quality training data can enhance research.** Sharing and making more high-quality training data available would enable better training of AI algorithms, and the EU could maximise AI's development in Europe and the value of its digital assets by allowing open access to machine-learning friendly datasets for R&D, provided that sufficient privacy and security protections remain.
8. **The EU should take a thoughtful approach to data sharing for law enforcement purposes.** Europe should work towards a clear framework for businesses when it comes to law enforcement cooperation. Efficient information-sharing and data access request mechanisms need to be established at an EU level. The EU should bear in mind that its approach to government access to data will set a precedent impacting individual rights globally, including in countries with fewer rule-of-law and fundamental rights safeguards.