



EURONEST PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY
ASSEMBLÉE PARLEMENTAIRE EURONEST
PARLAMETARISCHE VERSAMMLUNG EURONEST
ПАРЛАМЕНТСКАЯ АССАМБЛЕЯ ЕВРОНЕСТ

09.12.2019

RESOLUTION

on Facilitating digitalisation to improve efficiency and stimulate economic growth in the EU and Eastern Partnership countries

Resolution by the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly on ‘Facilitating digitalisation to improve efficiency and stimulate economic growth in the EU and Eastern Partnership countries’

The Euronest Parliamentary Assembly,

- having regard to the Constituent Act of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly of 3 May 2011 and the Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit of 24 November 2017,
- having regard to the Association Agreements between the EU on one side and Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine on the other side, in particular the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas (DCFTA),
- having regard to the World Investment Reports published by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development,
- having regard to the Commission and External European Action Service Joint Staff Working Document of 9 June 2017 on "Eastern Partnership - 20 Deliverables for 2020 focusing on key priorities and tangible results",
- having regard to the European Neighbourhood Policy that came into force in 2014 as part of the European Neighbourhood Instrument for 2014-2020,
- having regard to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit on 25 September 2015,
- having regard to the Joint Statement of the Visegrad Group’s Ministers of Foreign Affairs on the Eastern Partnership, following the results of their meeting in Warsaw on 12 April 2017, providing prospects for EU membership to the Eastern Partnership countries interested in it,
- having regard to the Second Eastern Partnership Ministerial Meeting on the Digital Economy on 5 th October 2017, Tallinn, Estonia,
- having regard to the ENI – EU4Digital: supporting digital economy and society in the Eastern Partnership,
- having regard to the Programming of the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) – 2014–2020 Regional East Strategy Paper (2014–2020) and Multiannual Indicative Programme (2017–2020),
- having regard to the Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council Cybersecurity Strategy of the European Union: An Open, Safe and Secure Cyberspace on 7 February 2013,
- having regard to the Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council Resilience, Deterrence and Defence: Building strong cybersecurity for the EU on 13 September 2017

- A. whereas the cooperation in the framework of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly aims at bringing about positive effects by developing national systems for electronic trade and electronic logistics, including Digital Transport Corridors, in the Partner Countries through their harmonisation with the EU's Digital Single Market best practices;
- B. whereas the enhanced cooperation between the EU and Eastern European Partners in the area of digital economy would provide new opportunities for businesses and citizens, bringing economic growth and prosperity;
- C. whereas the harmonisation of digital markets within the EU4Digital initiative has been supported by the participants of the Eastern Partnership and the EU to remove existing challenges and barriers to pan-European online services for citizens, State administrations and enterprises;
- D. whereas the development of a digital economy would contribute to creation of new jobs, increased business efficiency, attracting investments, stimulating trade, modernisation of economies innovations development, and increasing transparency;
- E. whereas it is widely accepted that facilitating digitalisation can be essential for the short and long-term economic growth of EaP countries and EU Member States, as this approach provides spill-over benefits through technology and skills transfer;
- F. whereas greenhouse gas emissions linked to digitalisation are rapidly increasing, as large amounts of electricity are needed for processing and storage of big data as well as for manufacturing of computers, screens and smartphones;
- G. whereas digital technologies have a substantial negative impact on the environment and human health in terms of waste production and export to poor countries, excessive water consumption and polluting raw material extraction, often in areas in conflict;
- H. whereas the “20 Deliverables for 2020” document had stated the importance of digitalisation and set a number of ambitious goals aimed at harmonising digital markets under the “Economic development and market opportunities” pillar;
- I. whereas the digital economy plays an important role in bilateral dialogues as one of the priority areas for the EU – EaP countries cooperation along with interoperability framework, e-trade, e-health and abolishing roaming fees for partner countries;
- J. whereas the Eastern Partnership Connect program aims to reduce the digital divide between the Eastern Partnership countries and support the needs of the research and education communities of national research and education networks;
- K. whereas the cyber-security component is now recognised as an integral part of an effective digitalisation process and public-private partnerships;
- L. having regard to the Association Agreement between the EU and Georgia, the Association Agreement between the EU and Moldova, the Association Agreement between the EU and Ukraine, the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement between the EU and Armenia, and the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the EU and Azerbaijan;

1. underlines the strategic importance of facilitating digitalisation, as a process aimed at improving efficiency and stimulating economic growth in the EU and Eastern Partnership countries; highlights that the untapped potential of cooperation between the EU and Eastern European Partners in the area of the digital economy and society could be unlocked by investments in broadband infrastructure, by an harmonisation of legislation with EU norms, and by an accelerated integration of the EU's Digital Single Market;
2. recognises that the integration of digital technologies into the daily life, which contributes to the availability of more reliable and helpful information and its processing, attracts significant unrealised potential for economic growth, productivity and social protection;
3. considers that the potential of digitalisation in combination with the new technologies, which include artificial intelligence, big data, biometrics and distributed ledger technology, can simultaneously improve the provision of public services, management quality and fiscal transparency, which will reduce corrupt transactions; underlines that, at the same time, this facilitation can trigger market volatility, increase vulnerability to cyber-attacks and frauds through excessive concentration and weak legal regulation;
4. notes that the strategic approaches to digitalisation in different national economies depend on institutional conditions, traditions and power relations; recognises that in terms of digital societies, economy and innovation, there is a gap between the EU and Eastern European partners, which can cause even deeper divides in the future with the growth of a digital industry and Work 4.0; considers that it is necessary to take into account the workers' rights and to offer the same treatment to all employees, whether they are engaged in the digital economy or not;
5. considers that, in order to reduce the economic risks of digitalisation, it is necessary to implement comprehensive reform programs for the national governments, absorb adequate resource endowment and realise coordinated approach of the EU and EaP countries in regulating the digitalisation processes;
6. stresses the importance of harmonising the digital markets of the EaP countries with a single digital EU market; asserts the need to form common bases for developing digital markets programs, regulating digital market services and approving innovations in the field of information and communication technologies, telecommunications, digital trust management and security, electronic skills, electronic health and e-commerce;
7. recognises that the development of uniform rules and standards to ensure the integrity of data, algorithms and platforms by national governments will strengthen the use of digital systems to protect consumers in a variety of ways, including transparent and balanced contracts and privacy rights;
8. calls on the EaP countries to accelerate the process of harmonising national legislation to improve the protection of personal data by reforming the system and rules of cyber security in accordance with EU legal norms; believes that building consumer confidence, privacy, data protection and protection of intellectual property rights will facilitate the free flow of information, ideas and knowledge;
9. stresses the need to accompany the deployment of the digital technologies with a set of standards which will contribute to the social and environmental sustainability of ICT value

chains, to ensure that action on digitalisation fits with the Sustainable Development Goals and targets of climate, energy and environment policies;

10. stresses the need for better harmonisation of joint activities and approval of digital trading rules for contracts and supply of digital content, cross-border transfer of online content services, geo-blocking and consumer protection;
11. emphasises the importance of collaborative cross-border e-identification for creating and verifying eSignatures and eSeals; notes the need to harmonise common rules for legal certainty and technical compatibility for e-mail identifiers and electronic signatures and trust service providers that offer these services within the EaP countries and the EU;
12. draws attention to the importance of stimulating economic growth by creating jobs and business opportunities, particularly the support for Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) as well improving environment for their functioning in the EaP countries; welcomes the results of 64th Eastern Partnership Business Forum, with focus on digital economy and innovations as well as strengthening direct business-to-business relations between the SMEs;
13. calls on the national governments and private companies to create cross-border innovative hubs taking into account the possibilities for new growth in areas with sufficient digital skills and technological infrastructure that will decrease unemployment and stimulate higher wages;
14. stresses that the systematic involvement of key actors such as trade unions and employers' associations and the revitalisation of corporatist structures seem to be a promising strategy for facilitating digitalisation to improve efficiency and stimulate economic growth in the EU and Eastern Partnership countries;
15. notes that innovations in telecommunications (telegraph, telephone, radio, TV, internet) industry (production facilities and methods), transportation (trains, cars, planes) and health and hygiene (penicillin, X-rays) can not only create markets for products, but also are able to help in solving societal problems;
16. draws attention to the importance of stimulating digital innovations, creating new formats for cooperation aiming to ensure the development of coordination in this sphere, as well as the participation of state and private sectors in this platform;
17. stresses that EaP countries are facing big challenges in creating building blocks for a successful digital economy and Industry 4.0; draws attention to the necessity of creating favourable environment for developing an adaptive and creative workforce empowered with future-proof digital skills to drive innovation, as well as a cohesive, collaborative and effective institutional framework for digital transformation; even though e-government projects have made substantial changes in the functioning of countries and their economies, further efforts are required at both regional and national levels in terms of taxation, social systems, labor laws, the modernisation of education, support for innovation, social dialogue and e-business.
18. notes the need for more intensive development of public-private partnership in the field of cybersecurity (both at the national and international levels), which should be aimed at

developing greater trust between key stakeholders, creating effective tools for their interaction, facilitating the rapid exchange of information on cyber incidents and cyber attacks, first of all in the economic sphere;

19. calls on the EU and EaP countries to consider the specific risks posed by Russian actors involved in cyber-attacks and abuse of native product functionality; stresses the need to adapt cyber security, defence, and deterrence policies on national level through regularly updated action plans with concrete objectives and timelines;
20. calls on the EU and Eastern European Partners to improve interaction between regions using the potential of the national and regional research and education networks, such as NREN (National Research and Education Network) and GÉANT (pan-European data network for the research and education community).