



Management Plan 2023

Directorate-General for Communications
Networks, Content and Technology

Contents

Introduction.....	3
Part 1. Delivering on the Commission's priorities: main outputs for 2023	5
Part 2. Modernising the administration: main outputs for 2023.....	28
A. Human resource management	28
B. Sound financial management	30
C. Fraud risk management	32
D. Digital transformation and information management.....	34
E. Sound environmental management.....	37
F. Initiatives to improve economy and efficiency of financial and non-financial activities	39
ANNEX: Performance tables.....	40

Introduction

The Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology (CONNECT) supports the digital transformation of the Union's economy and society, fosters the internal market, and makes Europe fit for the digital age. To achieve these goals, we work in close cooperation with DG Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (GROW) and DG Defence Industry and Space (DEFIS), which are all under the lead of the Commissioner for the Internal Market, Thierry Breton.

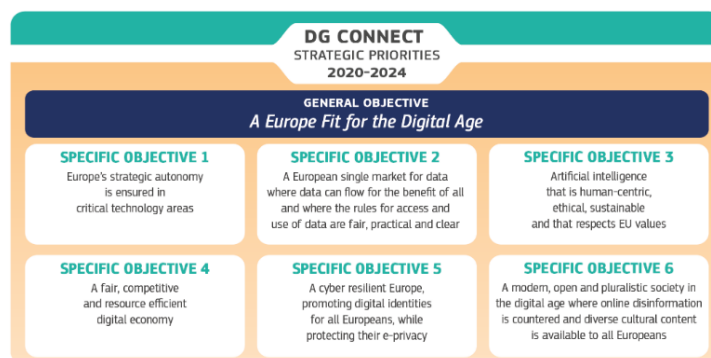
We pursue the Commission's general objective of achieving **'A Europe Fit for the Digital Age'** through legislation, policy initiatives, eco-system building and by investing in the research, innovation, deployment and uptake of trustworthy, green digital technologies. The **digital decade policy programme**, the first digital strategy agreed with Member States, includes clear objectives and targets and aims at shaping a successful digital transformation, notably to empower people and businesses to seize a human centred, sustainable and more prosperous digital future where no-one is left behind.

In the context of an accelerating digitalisation in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, CONNECT will continue to support the implementation of the **Recovery and Resilience Facility** (RRF) of NextGenerationEU and, hence, make sure that digital, which represents 26% of total RRF investment in the Member States, contributes to the short-term recovery and long-term prosperity.


In relation to the **Russian war of aggression against Ukraine** and the related new challenges for Europe and the world, CONNECT is monitoring cyber-malicious activities linked to the Russian aggression and its spill-over effects in the Union and its institutions. CONNECT will continue to counter disinformation related to the war. To support the Ukrainian people, we will assess how to apply the roam-like-at-home rules between EU and Ukraine and will continue to facilitate the implementation and monitoring of the operators' voluntary temporary solution in support of refugees in cooperation with the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications. We will assist Ukraine in creating the technical pre-conditions for the recognition of Ukrainian advanced electronic signatures in the EU, and to deploy a digital identity (eID) node in that country.





CONNECT will focus on the general objective 'A Europe fit for the digital age' through six specific objectives:




To achieve these objectives and realise the vision of an autonomous, secure, free, and human-centred digital society, CONNECT will deliver a series of important outputs which are set out in the 2023 Commission work programme ⁽¹⁾.

One of the initiatives is the **proposal on virtual worlds, such as the metaverse** . With this, we intend to ensure an open and human-centric metaverse, through various strands: technology development, standard setting, investment partnerships and content creation.

The new **radio spectrum policy programme**  will strengthen governance and the common market dimension in radio spectrum at EU-level.

To tackle the shortage of cybersecurity skills in the European Union, CONNECT will launch a **cyber skills academy** , which will be a European umbrella initiative integrating the various ongoing activities at European, national and local level.

With the proposal of a **recommendation on piracy of live content**  we aim to set out how the existing legal tools should be applied to fight illegal streaming of live events, in particular live sport events.

CONNECT will continue its efforts to facilitate the negotiations of some key initiatives pending approval by the European Parliament and the Council, such as the **artificial intelligence act**, the **data act**, the **chips act**, the **Regulation on privacy and electronic communications**, the framework establishing a **European digital identity**, the **proposal on horizontal cybersecurity requirements for products with digital elements (cyber resilience act)** and the **European media freedom act**.

One of the main challenges for CONNECT will be the implementation of the **digital services act** and the **digital markets act**. These landmark new rules were politically agreed in 2022 as a flagship achievement of this Commission's digital policy portfolio and entrust the enforcement of the rules for the largest gatekeeper platforms to the Commission. The challenge for CONNECT will be to establish a robust and powerful regulatory structure prior to the application and enforcement of these rules.

⁽¹⁾ The  icon indicates initiatives featured in annexes I and II of the 2023 Commission work programme.

PART 1. Delivering on the Commission’s priorities: main outputs for 2023

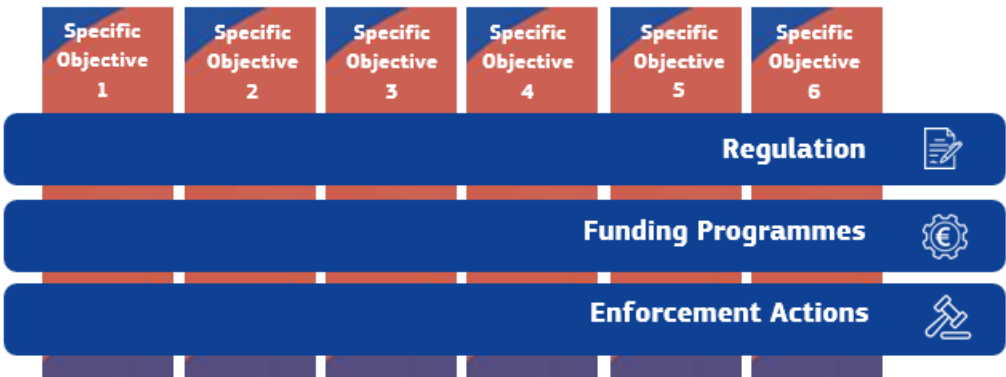
General Objective:

A Europe fit for the Digital Age

To help make ‘A Europe fit for the Digital Age’ in a post-COVID context, CONNECT will implement the **digital decade policy programme**, which provides a common and comprehensive vision for EU’s digital transformation by 2030, with concrete objectives, quantitative targets, and a robust governance mechanism to achieve them, taking into account the European **declaration on digital rights and principles**.

CONNECT will support the implementation of the policy programme and of the declaration, mobilising all digital policies and initiatives. Every year in June, starting in 2023, the **Report on the state of the digital decade** will take stock of the progress made by the EU and Member States, monitored notably by the digital economy and society index for the digital targets, and recommend actions including per Member States where needed.

CONNECT will ensure a consistent and coordinated internal preparation of new policy cycles in line with Commission’s decision making and better regulation processes, in particular as concerns public consultations and impact assessments for policy proposals. The DG will also leverage its significant experience in conducting inter-institutional co-decision negotiations to ensure quality-enhancing and smooth negotiations on the pending and forthcoming legislative proposals. Finally, CONNECT will continue to ensure efficient handling of infringements and complaints within its remits.



To support the implementation of its policies and reach its objectives, CONNECT will use several funding programmes that cover the different aspects of the digital transformation:

- **Digital Europe programme** (total budget of EUR 1.31 billion for 2023) – with the objective of reinforcing EU critical digital capacities in five key areas: supercomputing, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, advanced digital skills, and ensuring a wide use of digital technologies across the economy and society, including through digital

innovation hubs. Seven sets of calls for proposals will be concluded in 2023, providing key support to the digital transformation of the economy in the next decade, as well as strengthening the EU's digital sovereignty by deploying key technological capabilities.

- **Connecting Europe Facility - Digital** (total budget of EUR 289.08 million for 2023) – with the objective of supporting investment in 5G, strategic fibre, and satellite backbone infrastructures, contributing to the gigabit and 5G targets for 2030 and the strategic autonomy of the Union.
- **Horizon Europe research framework programme** (total budget of EUR 1.12 billion ⁽²⁾ for 2023) – with the objective of financing research and innovation activities in all strategic digital areas to develop European technologies all along the digital supply chain: processors and semiconductors, photonics, edge computing advanced computing and quantum, 6G, artificial intelligence/data/robotics, and next-generation internet.
- **Creative Europe - MEDIA and cross-sectoral strands** (total budget of EUR 203.91 million for 2023) – with the objective of supporting the audio-visual and news media sectors for the creation, cross-border circulation, and developing audiences of high-quality European films, television programmes and video games. In addition, it supports news media freedom and pluralism.

CONNECT also plays an important role in the implementation of the **Recovery and Resilience facility** (RRF), which is the largest instrument under NextGenerationEU. EUR 130 billion in the national Recovery and Resilience Plans have been earmarked for digital expenditure, representing 26% of total RRF investment in these Member States and going beyond the requirement of the 20% target. CONNECT is involved in the assessment of the implementation of the plans, in particular for what concerns measures addressing the digital transformation. Moreover, due the integration of the REPower EU chapter and the updated RRF financial allocation, the plans will be amended and CONNECT will be involved in the assessment of the amended plans.

CONNECT will continue its efforts to provide a clear narrative on the benefits of the EU's action towards a positive digital transition. It will support media campaigns that illustrate the Commission's vision, priorities, and deliverables.

In 2023, CONNECT will focus its communication efforts, in line with the Commission's priorities, through the digital strategy website, DigitalEU channels on social media, including the increasingly popular LinkedIn account. CONNECT will also communicate through the spokesperson service, the Commission's representations and through multipliers in external

⁽²⁾ This amount refers to the part of the programme under CONNECT's management.

projects involving influencers from several Member States (France, Italy, Poland, and to be extended to Germany, Spain, Ireland, Romania and Sweden).

Specific objective 1

Europe's strategic autonomy is ensured in critical technology areas

Related to spending programmes:
Horizon Europe programme, Digital
Europe programme, Connecting
Europe Facility – Digital

Investment in critical technologies and in disruptive innovation is essential to achieve Europe's open strategic autonomy and to reach the digital decade policy programme objectives agreed with Member States of, *inter alia*, addressing Europe's strategic vulnerabilities and dependencies in order to enhance its resilience. More specifically, the digital decade policy programme sets multiple digital targets in the area of digital leadership and sovereignty, including in reference to the availability of quantum computing, the number of European unicorns as well as the semiconductor production, with the objective to be at the cutting-edge in these areas by 2030.

CONNECT will continue its support to the **European High Performance Computing Joint Undertaking** (EuroHPC JU) to deliver a world class data infrastructure in Europe. In 2023, the EuroHPC JU will inaugurate two additional systems: the MareNostrum 5 pre-exascale supercomputer in Spain and Deucalion petascale supercomputer in Portugal. In addition, JUPITER – the first exascale European supercomputer – located in Germany will be procured in 2023 by the JU and four more mid-range supercomputers will be deployed in Greece, Hungary, Ireland, and Poland. They will increase, at least by the factor of four, the available computing power of the EU that will be available to users from academia, industry and the public sector across Europe and will place Europe as a world supercomputing power.

CONNECT, together with the EuroHPC JU, aims to continue the efforts in the development of new high-end low-power processors. The **European processor** initiative will help to create a state-of-the-art European semiconductor ecosystem ensuring, thus, the security and resilience of our future supply chains.

One of the digital decade targets for quantum technologies is for Europe to have, by 2025, its first computer with quantum acceleration. Following the October 2022 announcement of the six hosting sites where Europe's first quantum computers will be integrated into the EuroHPC JU's supercomputers, these new machines are expected to be operational by the second half of 2023, putting the target for 2025 well within reach.



Meanwhile, the **Quantum Technologies Flagship**, funded by the *Horizon Europe programme*, will continue its activities in 2023 with the aim of achieving further

outstanding research including, for example, work on a range of promising quantum computing platforms, and of converting this research into commercial applications, which will in turn stimulate Europe's growing quantum ecosystem helping the European Union's efforts to achieve strategic autonomy in this high-potential field.

The **European quantum communication infrastructure** (EuroQCI) will ultimately enable public administrations to transmit and store information and data very securely, and safeguard critical infrastructure and encryption systems across the EU. In 2023, actions supported under the *Digital Europe programme* will start the deployment of the EuroQCI infrastructure, notably through the experimental quantum key distribution networks across Europe. Under the *Connecting Europe Facility – Digital* actions will be prepared to support cross-border terrestrial links between national quantum communication networks, as well as deployment of optical ground stations for space links. Working closely with DG Defence Industry and Space, CONNECT will prepare the implementation of the **union secure connectivity programme** (infrastructure for resilience, interconnectivity and security by satellite - IRIS²), which is expected to be adopted in early 2023 and which will integrate the EuroQCI into a global space-based secure connectivity system for high-speed internet and secure governmental services.

The **Graphene Flagship** will complete its third phase, bringing this very promising material and other similar 2D materials from early proof of concept in the lab to industry relevant opportunities in a wide range of application sectors. Under the *Horizon Europe programme*, a new set of projects will support the continuation of the activities in 2D materials in specific applications areas like information and communication technology components, health sensors, energy storage and material composites.

The **Human Brain Project Flagship** will complete the delivery of a cutting-edge research infrastructure (EBRAINS) to allow scientific and industrial researchers advancing in neuroscience, computing, including neuromorphic computing, and brain-related medicine. In 2023 a new project will be launched to provide support to the further development of the EBRAINS infrastructure.

The **future battery technologies** (Battery 2030+) long term research initiative uses digital technologies, big data and artificial intelligence to accelerate research into high performing, smart and sustainable batteries. In 2023, the first results are expected such as a battery material acceleration platform and new battery sensing and self-healing capabilities. A new set of projects will be launched to support the second phase of implementing the main priorities identified in the battery 2030+ roadmap.

In the field of **connectivity** and as an enabler of digital capacities such as the European quantum communication infrastructure, cloud federation, high performance computing, as well as submarine and satellite backbone infrastructure, 5G cross-border corridors, 5G early take-up in local smart communities, CONNECT will intensify its actions towards leveraging public and private investment in very high-capacity networks, with the objective to cover

pan-European backbone infrastructure. This task will be funded by the *Connecting Europe Facility – Digital* through one or more calls launched in 2023.



The **Smart Network and Services Joint Undertaking** (SNS JU), expected to become autonomous in the third quarter of 2023, will play a key role in preparing Europe for the critical 6G technologies. The JU will notably work in the fields of new radio spectrum use, artificial intelligence extensive end-to-end use, security, specific technologies like non-terrestrial networks and develop the concept of sustainable 6G.

Together with the SNS JU, CONNECT will support the emergence of a **global 6G vision**, as planned by the International Telecommunications Union by the end of the year 2023.

In the area of microchips, following the proposal of the Commission, CONNECT will continue to work on the adoption and implementation of the **European chips act**. With it we aim to mobilise and coordinate public and private resources in Europe to increase coordination among Member States, help enhance European production capacity, support the European ecosystem, strengthen the semiconductor research strategy, and create a framework for international cooperation and partnership.

The Key Digital Technologies Joint Undertaking (which should become the **Chips Joint Undertaking** with approval of the chips act), and a second **important project of common European interest on microelectronics** will foster research and development and innovation, and first industrial deployment amongst industries on processors and semiconductor technologies across the participating Member States.

For the automotive sector, a twofold approach will be pursued: investments in a European automotive hardware platform, in particular in open-source processors, will reduce dependencies and strengthen the resilience of the sector. A complementary initiative on an open European software-defined vehicle platform and ecosystem – often called the car operating system – will ensure that Europe continues mastering the complete automotive value chain.

Photonic solutions provide the sensory input for digital systems and also underpin data and telecommunication with ultra-high bandwidth and power-efficient connections. The **photronics public-private partnership** builds and bridges communities across Europe, with support from the *Horizon Europe programme*. 2023 actions will focus on photonic integrated circuits and systems.

The concept of Europe's open strategic autonomy also covers the development of technologies that will help Europe to deal with climate change and to help local communities in using digital technologies for the direct benefit of citizens.

To this end, CONNECT works with different partners in the **Destination Earth** project. This project aims to develop a high-precision digital model of the Earth ('digital twin of the Earth'), which will serve as the basis for developing dedicated thematic applications and services, such as extreme weather monitoring and/or predictions to react to environmental crises. The complete digital twin/replica of the Earth will be composed of a number of thematic digital twins of the earth system (e.g., extreme natural disasters, climate change adaptation, oceans, biodiversity). Implementation activities started in 2022 and will continue in 2023 under the three main components: core platform, data lake and the first two thematic digital twins (extreme natural disasters, climate change adaptation).

As part of the local dimension of the digital decade, CONNECT will support the launch of the **1st Digital Mayors Assembly**. The DG will also support the **Living-in.eu** movement that will create a structured, transparent and shared monitoring system to measure digital maturity at the local level. Within this movement CONNECT will publish the first standard artificial intelligence procurement clauses for cities and communities.

With *Digital Europe programme* funding, CONNECT will support **smart and sustainable cities** and communities to fully benefit from the potential of data and artificial intelligence by releasing the first smart communities' dataspace blueprint and roadmap. The DG will launch a major procurement action to set-up an EU local digital twin toolbox for Europe.



CONNECT will continue to work with **GÉANT** (an association that operates the dedicated high performance pan-European research and education network serving more than 50 million researchers and students) to provide faster, more resilient and secure connectivity infrastructure, deliver effective collaboration services across virtual teams enabling evidence-based research, and upgrade long term intercontinental connectivity links with key partner organizations, aimed at supporting the rapidly growing needs of Europe's research and education community.

As part of its mission to build the technologies of the internet of tomorrow around people's fundamental needs and respecting EU values and norms, the **next generation internet** initiative will continue its work to develop internet technologies that support the implementation of several digital policies, in the field of data governance, digital identity, inclusion, trustworthy media and social networking, or internet sustainability. New projects will start in the areas of internet architecture, decentralised technologies and international cooperation. Important efforts will be dedicated to further develop the policy on the digital commons and to contribute to the CONNECT new policy for virtual reality/metaverse.

CONNECT will work with DG Informatics and the European Blockchain Partnership, to support new developments and the operation of a **pan European blockchain based infrastructure** (EBSI), implementing of cross border public services. In 2023, EBSI aims to engage with 100 to 200 universities to enable students to share education certificates, facilitating their verification in a reliable manner.

The main objective of the **startups and scaleups support** is to flank enforcement of the digital services act and the digital markets act ensuring that European startups have growth friendly conditions to become highly successful, competitive platforms in the global market. This will be done via the full operational launch of the European startup nations alliance. Other tools for startups and scaleups support include providing actionable intelligence to policy makers, or awareness raising of investment opportunities in EU-funded programmes.

Under this first specific objective, the main focus of communication activities will be on semiconductors, targeting stakeholders and the media. Other topics for communication will continue to be destination Earth (together with DG Defence Industry and Space), high performance computing (together with the EuroHPC JU), and mastering quantum technology.

The relevant performance table can be found in the Annex ([page 40](#)).

Specific objective 2	Related to spending programme:
A European single market for data where data can flow for the benefit of all and where the rules for access and use of data are fair, practical and clear	Horizon Europe programme, Digital Europe programme, Connecting Europe Facility – Digital

Data produced in the EU is generally stored and processed outside Europe. Its value is also extracted outside of the Union. In addition, EU-based cloud providers have a small share of the cloud market. The combination of these factors exposes the EU to significant risks and limits the benefits of data produced within the European Union. To tackle these shortcomings, CONNECT acts in multiple fronts. The digital decade policy programme aims at establishing secure and accessible European data infrastructures capable of efficiently storing, transmitting and processing vast volumes of data for the benefits of all including citizens, small and medium-sized enterprises and startups. The policy programme sets out some concrete digital targets to achieve this, notably the deployment of at least 10 000 climate-neutral highly secure edge nodes, distributed in such a way to ensure low latency across Europe, and the use of big data and cloud computing services by European enterprises. Furthermore, the programme includes a commitment to build a competitive, secure and sustainable data cloud infrastructure, with high security and privacy standards and complying with the Union data protection rules.

The objective of the **EU data strategy** ⁽³⁾ focuses on the availability of data for the benefit of all – notably by promoting business and government data-sharing within and across domains, within the single market and with non-EU Member States, in full respect of European rules and values.

⁽³⁾ [COM\(2020\) 66 final](#).

Enabling citizens access to their own health data is a key priority to empower people to be actively involved in their own health journey. In relation to the digitalization of public services, the digital decade policy programme sets a goal of 100% of citizens having access to electronic health records by 2030, by nationwide mechanism for online access to health data, and the ability to access the electronic health-record systems.



CONNECT will continue to operate and, where necessary, develop the **EU digital COVID certificate** (EUDCC) infrastructure and functionalities in accordance with requirements of the evolving epidemiological situation and the policy needs. CONNECT will work with other Commission services and with experts from Member States to identify and agree on possible long-term sustainable scenarios for the use of the EUDCC infrastructure. Work will also continue to open the EUDCC system to non-EU countries (in November 2022, more than 46 third countries had successfully connected to the EUDCC), and to support international initiatives, such as the World Health Organisation/G20 pilot scheme aiming at harmonising digital COVID protocols at global level.

CONNECT will continue to support the development of next-generation cloud and edge industrial capabilities to the benefits of consumers. CONNECT will contribute to notably finalise the technical assessment of the **forthcoming important project of common European interest on next generation cloud and edge infrastructure and services** and will also launch several large-scale pilots to demonstrate both the deployment at scale of cloud-to-edge services and federated cloud infrastructures supported by the *Digital Europe programme* and *Connecting Europe Facility – Digital*.

By the end of 2023, CONNECT will deliver a minimum viable product of **SIMPL**, the smart middleware platform that will allow stakeholders within a data ecosystem (such as a data space) to collaborate in a trusted manner, facilitating the emergence of a European cloud federation.

Through the research and innovation initiative under the *Horizon Europe* '**From Cloud-to-Edge-to-IoT for European Data**', CONNECT is supporting the evolution of the internet of things towards an intelligent infrastructure linking the real and the virtual world in a trustworthy and secure environment through large scale pilots emerging from the digital research and innovation projects, in vertical sectors like energy, mobility, agriculture and manufacturing as innovation actions.



CONNECT will launch the **EU online marketplace for federated cloud-to-edge based services** that will offer a single point of access and improve visibility of trusted European cloud service providers and their offerings. The DG will also publish an **EU cloud rulebook** offering a coherent framework around the different applicable rules (including self-regulation) for cloud services. CONNECT will update the **models to estimate and map the volume of cloud**

data flows and their economic values and establish the **Edge Computing Observatory** to foster and track the adoption of this technology across Europe.

CONNECT will put in place **the European open science cloud**, an open digital infrastructure, providing data, tools and services for the entire research life cycle for promoting open science and large-scale interdisciplinary scientific cooperation in Europe.

Further to the adoption of the **data governance act**, we will monitor Member States activities implementing the Regulation and set up of the **European Data Innovation Board**. In 2022 the Commission adopted the proposal for a data act, including a set of measures to ensure fairness in the digital environment, stimulate a competitive data market, open opportunities for data-driven innovation and make data more accessible for all. In 2023, CONNECT will continue to follow up the co-decision legislative process for the **data act** in the European Parliament and the Council, in view of a swift adoption.

The Commission plans to adopt the **implementing Regulation on high value datasets** in early 2023. Based on the open data Directive, this Regulation will establish a list of datasets held by the public sector, to be made available via application programming interfaces, for free, in a machine-readable format and downloadable in bulk where appropriate.

CONNECT will coordinate, together with the Secretariat-General, the Commission initiatives supporting the deployment on **European data spaces**. A **data spaces support centre**, supported through the *Digital Europe programme*, will coordinate all relevant actions on data spaces, including on the interoperability of data sharing between sectors; it will also function as the operational arm of the **European Data Innovation Board**.

Together with other Directorates-General, CONNECT will lay the foundations of a genuine single market for data, where private and public entities can fully control the use of the data they generate and where both businesses and the public sector have easy access to a large pool of high-quality data. CONNECT will support the rollout of common European **data spaces in the mobility, agriculture, and energy sectors** as well as **dataspaces for cultural heritage, media, tourism, language, and skills**. Two **data spaces of the manufacturing industry** will demonstrate how sharing industrial data improves company operations.

Following the **EU action plan on digitalising the energy** CONNECT, working closely with DG Energy, is supporting several actions to implement innovative digital solutions and achieve an electricity grid that is smarter and more interactive than today, to boost data sharing and to promote investments in digital electricity infrastructure. Of particular note is the mandate to **develop a reference framework for an energy saving app**, to help consumers to reduce their energy bills, and to decouple the energy footprint of the information and communication technology sector from the exponential growth of data.

Based on the findings of the implementation report of the **2018 free flow of non-personal data Regulation**, CONNECT will focus on the enforcement of the Regulation.

The relevant performance table can be found in the Annex ([page 42](#)).

Specific objective 3	Related to spending programme: Horizon 2020 programme, Horizon Europe programme, Digital Europe programme
Artificial intelligence that is human-centric, ethical, sustainable and that respects EU values	

Building a digital transformation that is human centric, empowers people, reinforces societies and contributes to the green transition is at the heart of the digital decade policy programme. Clear objectives have been agreed with the Member states, notably to promote a human-centred, fundamental-rights-based, inclusive, transparent and open digital environment. The declaration on digital rights and principles, which is fully associated to the policy programme, also includes some clear commitments to ensure that artificial intelligence is at the service of people and increase their well-being while respecting their freedom of choice.

CONNECT will continue to contribute to the deliberations of the European Parliament and the Council to reach a swift agreement on the Commission proposal for a **regulatory framework for artificial intelligence (artificial intelligence act)**. It will adopt a mandate for artificial intelligence standardisation request and will follow closely the progress made by standardisation bodies.



CONNECT will, in cooperation, with other concerned Directorates-General, continue the implementation of the actions set out in the coordinated plan on artificial intelligence. To do so on the basis of a fruitful dialogue with Member States, CONNECT will regularly convene the new expert group of Member States on artificial intelligence.

The **European partnership on artificial intelligence, data and robotics** will present a joint strategic research, innovation and deployment agenda around artificial intelligence, data and robotics which will directly feed into the strategic research and technological roadmap on artificial intelligence. Furthermore, we will invest in additional **networks of artificial intelligence excellence centres** which bring together world-class researchers and contribute to make Europe an artificial intelligence powerhouse. The **European artificial intelligence on demand platform** will, under the *Digital Europe programme*, extend its offer to public administrations and industry (including small and medium-sized enterprises and startups) and support the uptake of artificial intelligence technologies by low tech users. The **testing and experimentation facilities** will start offering expertise

and services to European innovators, including access to data spaces and high performance computing/cloud infrastructure to test artificial intelligence technology in the sectors of healthcare, agri-food, manufacturing and smart cities and enabling mature and promising technologies to reach the market.

Our communication efforts will focus mainly on artificial intelligence and its benefits for people and society, especially in view of finalising the world’s first framework on AI. CONNECT communication activities will target both stakeholders and the broader public, with particular attention to younger audiences.

CONNECT will organise the **4th AI Alliance Assembly** to involve stakeholders. It will also reach out to partners around the world to promote the European policy on artificial intelligence, continuing the specific cooperation established with Japan and India and pursuing the close cooperation with the United States of America (through the Trade and Technology Council) and with Canada.

The relevant performance table can be found in the Annex ([page 44](#)).


Specific objective 4	Related to spending programme: Horizon Europe programme, Digital Europe programme, Connecting Europe Facility – Digital
A fair, competitive and resource efficient digital economy	

The European vision for a digital economy and society in 2030 established in the digital decade policy programme is anchored in digital empowered and capable citizens, digital skilled workforce, excellent digital infrastructures, fair competition and rule-based trade system, strong digital single market with a digital regulatory environment in place to strengthen the European digital ecosystem and support the ability of European undertakings to compete fairly along global value chains, with embedded European values, and respect to the environment. This is underlined in the digital decade policy programme’s digital objectives which take into account the interests of citizens, businesses and of the society at large, including their need to be able to make autonomous choices and to rely on a more resilient and sovereign digital ecosystem. The policy programme is also aiming at building an ecosystem that fosters the growth of innovative scale-ups through a specific target on unicorns, in a context where the EU is still punching below its weight in terms of major digital companies of global scale. To help to achieve these goals, CONNECT will take numerous actions.

One of the key initiatives of the DG will be the initiative on virtual worlds, such as the **metaverse** 🏠. CONNECT will propose an initiative to further support the development of an open human-centric metaverse, through various strands: technology development, standard setting, investment partnerships and content creation. In this area, CONNECT will launch a wide consultation with stakeholders to analyse existing related standardisation

activities in relation with the metaverse and identify standardisation needs, in view of defining a roadmap on metaverse standardisation.

Two very important tools to ensure the correct functioning of the digital single market are the **digital services act** and the **digital markets act**. Applying, respectively, to all digital services that connect consumers to goods, services, or content, and to the digital platforms that provide an important gateway between business users and consumers in a position of power to act as a private rule maker ('gatekeepers'), the objectives of these Regulations are closely aligned with the key objectives of the digital decade policy programme. CONNECT will work to establish the necessary regulatory structures and capacities to enable the effective enforcement of these new rules, which entails significant administrative tasks and close interactions with stakeholders.

Radio spectrum is a very important field in today's world. It is in the electromagnetic waves that a significant part of our communications take place. For this reason, strengthening the governance and the common market perspective of **radio spectrum** is a priority towards achieving the digital decade infrastructure and connectivity targets. Therefore, CONNECT will work on **spectrum management for the digital decade (the radio spectrum policy programme 2.0)** .



Priorities in 2023 include the harmonisation of spectrum for 5G services, including on board vessels. In cooperation with DG Mobility and Transport, CONNECT will also assess the necessity of reviewing the spectrum harmonisation framework for intelligent transport systems.

In the field of 5G, the **enforcement measures on the authorisation of 5G pioneer bands** will be continued, and the **spectrum awards observatory** will be created, as part of the 5G observatory. The objective is to create a sustainable fact base for benchmarking and guidance initiatives by the Commission, and to reinforce a coherent spectrum roadmap in Europe. CONNECT will collaborate with the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications to develop harmonized and detailed key performance indicators on 5G targets. The European 5G Observatory will also assist the Commission in developing the new monitoring approach.

To further develop **broadband networks** and to bring gigabit connectivity for every business and every household in Europe, CONNECT will take multiple actions and will use different funding instruments such as the *Recovery and Resilience Facility*, *Connecting Europe Facility – Digital*, European regional development fund and European agricultural fund for rural development, as well as the connecting Europe broadband fund. With this work CONNECT expects to leverage public and private investments in very high-capacity networks to reach the 2030 digital decade targets.

Furthermore, the Commission supports the implementation of the new Union's secure connectivity programme 2023-2027 IRIS² (infrastructure for resilience, interconnectivity

and security by satellite) with a budget of EUR 2.4 billion, which also includes satellite broadband coverage in rural areas. Satellites could provide resilient and flexible connectivity allowing Europe to always remain connected, including in the event of large-scale cyber-attacks.

CONNECT will finalise measures for a **connectivity package** in early 2023. The package will consist of (i) a legislative proposal for a new **gigabit infrastructure act** (review of the broadband cost reduction Directive); (ii) a draft **gigabit Recommendation** that will replace the 2010 next generation access and 2013 non-discrimination and costing methodologies Recommendations (in consultation with the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications); and (iii) the launch of an **exploratory consultation on the future of the electronic communications sector and its infrastructure**. The connectivity package, together with the recently published new state aid guidelines for broadband, will be critical for the achievement of the **digital decade connectivity targets** and for the optimal use of European and national public resources funding connectivity infrastructure.

The **gigabit infrastructure act** aims to reduce red tape and administrative burden associated with the deployment of electronic communications networks, by reducing to the



minimum the permits needed and by simplifying and digitalising all related processes. It also aims at fostering 5G deployment, in particular by broadening the physical infrastructure where network elements can be installed and by improving the related information and by further promoting the coordination of civil works. The gigabit infrastructure act will build on best practices (and go beyond) of the **connectivity toolbox** (agreed by the Member States in March 2021) and respond to the increased need

for very high capacity and sustainable fixed and mobile connectivity for businesses and citizens. CONNECT will support the subsequent negotiation process with co-legislators of the gigabit infrastructure act.

Further, the draft **gigabit Recommendation**, to be consulted with the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC), will provide guidance on the implementation of the provisions of the European Electronic Communications Code based in particular on the case experience gained in the last decade. The aim is to ensure a consistent implementation of the framework and foster regulatory incentives for the deployment of very high capacity networks, notably by adequately rewarding investment. The new guidance would complement other sources of guidance on the Code (2018 Commission significant market power guidelines and 2020 relevant market recommendation as well as guidelines that have been issued by the BEREC), as well as the proposal on the gigabit infrastructure act. Following BEREC's opinion, the Recommendation will be finalised and published.

Last, the exploratory consultation on the future of the electronic communications sector and its infrastructure launches a broad reflection on the future of the electronic communications sector taking into account technological changes and market developments to understand their impact on consumers and on the infrastructure and the business models sustaining its deployment.

To support the achievement of the connectivity targets and to ensure full participation of all EU citizens in the digital economy and society, CONNECT will monitor the **enforcement of the European Electronic Communications Code**.

Some obligations from the **2022 roaming Regulation** will enter into force in 2023. To ensure consistent implementation of the Regulation and continuation of the roam-like-at-home regime with improved conditions for roaming end-users, CONNECT will monitor the implementation of its rules. One relevant aspect is the planned review of the Commission implementing Regulation on fair use policies and the sustainability mechanism in 2023-2024.

As announced by the Commission President, CONNECT and other Commission services are assessing all legal possibilities to ensure application of the **roam-like-at-home rules** between EU and Ukraine. CONNECT, in cooperation with the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications, the Ukrainian National Regulatory Authority and operators, will continue to facilitate the implementation and monitoring of the operators' voluntary temporary solution in support of refugees. In parallel, CONNECT continues to coordinate the process with other involved services and with Ukrainian authorities on the conditions and timeline for implementation of a long-term roaming solution. The EU-Ukraine Association Agreement provides for reciprocal internal market treatment in certain sectors, including electronic communications services which can be a good basis for a longer-term roaming arrangement ensuring compatibility with the EU's international obligations. Moldova and Georgia have equally officially requested to join the roam-like-at-home regime and discussions are ongoing at technical level with particular focus on possibilities to reduce wholesale rates for termination. CONNECT has supported the Regional Roaming Agreement that enabled regional roam-like-at-home from 1 July 2021 and continues to support policy reforms. Building on that success, operators from the EU and Western Balkans signed a joint declaration committing to voluntarily bring down roaming charges both at retail and wholesale level.

In line with the 2018 Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC) Regulation, CONNECT will conduct an **evaluation of the performance of BEREC** and the BEREC Office.

Data centres are the backbone of cloud computing, a technology with multiple roles in the digital economy. To make them climate-neutral, highly energy efficient, and sustainable by 2030, CONNECT will contribute to a **measurement framework for data centres** in line with the energy efficiency Directive. CONNECT will also assist in the implementation of the taxonomy Regulation climate delegated act by preparing a **data centre assessment**

framework enabling third parties to perform compliance audits in accordance with the Joint Research Centre's code of conduct on energy efficient data centres.

Building on the work of the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications, national regulators and electronic communications providers, CONNECT, together with other Commission services, stakeholders, and the scientific community will continue exploring the possibility to develop **common indicators for measuring the environmental footprint of electronic communications**.

A digital economy cannot function properly if society and work force are not sufficiently skilled. In order to reach the target of having **80% of the population mastering basic digital skills and 20 million information and communications technology specialists**, CONNECT will work in



three strands of activities: *i*) bachelors, masters and short modules in key digital capacity areas for adults; *ii*) the EU Code Week activities for younger people; and *iii*) the digital skills and jobs coalition platform. It will act as a central point for digital skills information in Europe and as a hub for national digital skills and jobs coalitions community.

In addition, CONNECT will contribute to **two Council Recommendations on digital education and skills** and a recommendation chapeau.

With regard to industry, another pillar of the digital economy, CONNECT will be managing the network of **European digital innovation hubs** (EDIH), which was started at the end of 2022, to support small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) and the public sector in their digital transformation. In 2023 it is expected that the impact of the EDIH, in terms of increased digital maturity of SMEs, will start to be visible. Furthermore, we will monitor the implementation of measures for the digitalisation of businesses launched under the National Recovery and Resilience Plans, which in several cases complement and extend the objectives of the EDIH network.

In terms of research and innovation, CONNECT will develop, in collaboration with DG Research and Innovation and the private partner European Factories of the Future Research Association, the calls of the *Horizon Europe programme* aiming at developing the **strategic digital technologies for competitive and sustainable manufacturing**.

To support the proper functioning of the digital single market, CONNECT will cooperate with DG Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs in the implementation of the different actions of the EU strategy on **standardisation**, in particular digital standards. In addition to fostering the participation of EU experts on information and communications technology (ICT) standardisation and monitor ICT standardisation activities at global level, CONNECT will publish in the first quarter of 2023 a **new version of the rolling plan on ICT standardisation** identifying ICT standardisation needs to support EU policies to ensure

the development of harmonised standards in support of regulatory actions (artificial intelligence, smart contracts, data, and digital identity - eID).

Regarding digital payments, CONNECT is cooperating with DG Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union and DG Economic and Financial Affairs on the legislative proposal for a retail central bank digital currency in the euro area: the **digital Euro**. This legislative work runs in parallel to technical cooperation between CONNECT and the European Central Bank on using the future European digital identity wallet as tool for identifying payers and initiating payments.

Besides these major new pieces of legislation, CONNECT will continue to monitor the effects of the **geoblocking Regulation**. A dedicated study is in progress, notably taking into account the effects of the COVID pandemic, on the cross-border access to e-Commerce websites and any restrictions users may face.

CONNECT will continue delivering on the key objectives of the Commission in **internet governance**, including assessing how it can best contribute to improving global digital cooperation, promoting EU values and policy framework and reforming the internet governance mechanisms, in order to make them more inclusive, operational and effective. CONNECT, together with the European External Action Service and the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments, will support the work of the new United Nations (UN) Technology Envoy Office who will be responsible for the implementation of the UN Secretary-General's roadmap for digital cooperation and the global digital compact.

Delivering on the **2020 security Union strategy** and **2020 cybersecurity strategy**, CONNECT will support the implementation of the Directive on measures for a high common level of cybersecurity across the Union (NIS 2 Directive), and work on the deployment of autonomous European resolution capabilities (DNS4EU) and the adoption of world-class internet standards and protocols in the EU (in particular IPV6 and key internet security standards). The DG will also work with international partners to improve the mechanisms for monitoring the internet and the capacity to react to major disruptions, including government-driven internet shutdowns.

CONNECT will establish the multistakeholder advisory group for Regulation (EU) 2019/517 on the implementation and functioning of the **.eu top-level domain name**.

Regarding the international level, CONNECT will continue to develop and implement the **global digital cooperation strategy** in close cooperation with the European External Action Service and relevant Directorates-General. In cooperation with DG Trade and based on Trade and Technology Council (TTC) with the USA, CONNECT is developing a similar TTC with India. Furthermore, digital partnerships are being



established with a number of like-minded countries in East and Southeast Asia and in the Americas. Efforts are being made to deepen the association and support the accession of neighbourhood countries, including strong support to Ukraine. The global gateway strategy is being implemented to promote a global human centric digital transformation and European values and interests. CONNECT continues to ensure that the EU digital policy is promoted in international fora, such as G7, G20, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the United Nations, and in particular in the International Telecommunication Union's, where CONNECT will support the Council in adopting a Decision on the EU position to be taken on radio spectrum at the International Telecommunication Union's World Radiocommunication Conference of 2023. CONNECT will actively promote the principles and rights of the declaration of the future of the internet and will support European External Action Service in its efforts to make more countries sign the declaration.

Communication efforts will place particular focus on the benefits of the digital services act and the digital markets act through continued dedicated audiovisual content and specific messages already tested in nine selected Member States. A dedicated communication campaign builds on experiences with reaching beyond the EU bubble through influencers in five selected Member States (Czechia, Germany, Spain, France and Ireland).

CONNECT will also communicate on digital opportunities such as the metaverse and all topics related to connectivity including spectrum and the possible extension of efforts to facilitate roaming for displaced Ukrainians.


The relevant performance table can be found in the Annex ([page 45](#)).

<p>Specific objective 5</p> <p>A cyber resilient Europe, promoting digital identities for all Europeans, while protecting their e-privacy</p>	<p>Related to spending programme: Horizon Europe programme, Digital Europe programme</p>
---	--

In a world where digital plays a central role in citizens' and business' lives, ensuring security and resilience of the digital space is a pre-condition to foster the necessary trust which drives the future of the digital transformation. Developing a cyber-secure and resilient Europe is, therefore, a must. As established in the digital decade policy programme, digital objectives cover the need for secure digital technologies and services, the need to improve resilience to cyberattacks, as well as ensuring trusted and secure environments to access, for example, public services. In particular, the objective to promote digital identities for all Union citizens is reflected as one of the digital decade targets.

To reach this objective, CONNECT works together with the European Union Cybersecurity Agency in implementing the cybersecurity act and with the **European Cybersecurity Competence Centre**, which is expected to become autonomous and fully operational in the course of the year.



The shortage of cybersecurity skilled persons in the European Union constitutes a serious bottleneck for the EU's digital strength. For this reason, the Commission President announced the launch of a **cyber skills academy** , which will be a European umbrella initiative integrating the various ongoing activities at European, national and local levels, and for which CONNECT will be in the lead.

Furthermore, following the call of Member States and as outlined in the Joint Communication on the EU Policy on Cyber Defence of November 2022, the Commission will propose an EU Cyber Solidarity Initiative, including a possible act to make legislative changes to the *Digital Europe* programme to strengthen common EU detection, situational awareness and response capabilities, to gradually build an EU-level cyber reserve with services from trusted private providers, and to support testing of critical entities for potential vulnerabilities based on EU risk assessments.

2023 will also be a key year in the implementation of the **2020 EU cybersecurity strategy**, as many initiatives will start to provide tangible results. For example, following the entering into force of the Directive on measures for a high common level of cybersecurity across the Union (NIS 2 Directive) in the end of 2022, CONNECT will work on the guidelines on the application of the *lex specialis* clause (Article 4(1) and (2)), and on the necessary implementing acts in relation to the cybersecurity risk management and reporting obligations. CONNECT will also work on the implementation of key actions from the Joint Communication on the EU Policy on Cyber Defence.

In close liaison with European External Action Service and the NIS Cooperation Group, CONNECT will **develop a methodology for collectively carrying out EU risk evaluation and building risk scenarios** from a cybersecurity perspective. The initial focus will be on communications, energy, transport and space sectors.

In addition, as part of the Commission's contribution to the implementation of the Directive on measures for a high common level of cybersecurity across the Union (NIS 2 Directive), in anticipation of the implementation of the cybersecurity solidarity mechanism, and in preparation of its participation in the Cyber Crises Liaison Organisation Network (CyCLONe), the Commission will work with the members of the cyber crisis task force (in particular the European Union Cybersecurity Agency and the Computer Security Incident Response Team of the European Union Institutions) on the development of a **cyber situation and analysis centre**, which will enable the Commission to carry out its responsibilities for crisis management. Moreover, the situation centre will help monitoring the cyber malicious activities linked to the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine and its spill over effects on EU and possibly EU institutions.

Finally, with the aim to provide timely warnings about cyber threats to authorities and relevant stakeholders, CONNECT will work on the set up of a **network of security operations centres** via funding under the *Digital Europe* programme.

European cybersecurity certification framework: key elements



Another field of action will be on the **EU-wide cybersecurity certification schemes** for information and communications technology products, services and processes. The **cloud security certification scheme**, currently under preparation by the European Union Cybersecurity Agency, is expected to be adopted by the Commission in 2023 and preparations for others (5G services) will

continue through ad-hoc working groups run by the agency.

Throughout the year, CONNECT will continue to support the approval by the co-legislators of the proposals that are under negotiation:

- the **e-Privacy Regulation**, that aims at providing users of electronic communications services a high level of privacy protection, confidentiality of communications, and integrity of the information in their terminal equipment (e.g., personal computers and smartphones).
- the **proposal on horizontal cybersecurity requirements for products with digital elements (cyber resilience act)** that aims at establishing common cybersecurity requirements for manufacturers and developers of products with digital elements.
- the proposal for a **Regulation establishing a European digital identity**, which will offer users self-determined personal digital wallets that allow a secure and easy access to different services, both public and private.

In the international arena, CONNECT will continue the cyber dialogue with the United States of America and also other important partners such as Ukraine. The intention is to intensify and deepen work concerning regulatory approaches, open-source security, standard setting and information sharing and to engage in the work of the international counter ransomware Initiative. We will assist Ukraine in creating the technical pre-conditions for the recognition of Ukrainian advanced electronic signatures in the EU, and to deploy a digital identity(eID) node for Ukraine.

Communication efforts under this objective will focus on cybersecurity, with a focus on the cybersecurity skills academy, the cybersecurity strategy and developments in the negotiations on the cyber resilience act among others. Important elements of CONNECT communication activities will be the initiatives on digital identity and ePrivacy that should be completed in 2023. CONNECT will also communicate on the funding opportunities in this field. CONNECT will endeavour to communicate beyond expert and stakeholder audiences, particularly targeting the relevant younger audiences.

The relevant performance table can be found in the Annex ([page 47](#)).

Specific objective 6

A modern, open and pluralistic society in the digital age where online disinformation is countered and diverse cultural content is available to all Europeans

Related to spending programme:
Horizon Europe programme, Creative
Europe - MEDIA

The digital decade policy programme and the declaration on digital rights and principles are aiming at building a society that can trust digital products and online services, that can identify disinformation, that is fully accessible for everyone, in which children are protected in the online space and learn how to understand and navigate through the information available online. It also seeks to ensure the respect of freedom of expression and the right to diverse, trustworthy and transparent information, and to pursue a clear objective of ensuring that online participation in democratic life is possible for everyone.

Experience during the COVID pandemic and the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine show that **online disinformation** can hamper the ability of citizens to make informed decisions, erode trust in institutions and the media, bringing serious risks for our democracies and putting the support of joint EU responses in danger.

The fight against disinformation has been stepped up with the 2022 **code of practice on disinformation**. The Commission will put in place a **monitoring mechanism** which will support the assessment of the implementation and impact of the code of practice on disinformation. More generally, in the field of fight against disinformation, CONNECT cooperates closely with other services, including the European External Action Services, DG Justice and Consumers, and DG Communications (especially the network against disinformation). The **digital services act** contains – for the first time in the world – a mandatory risk assessment for large online platforms in the EU to assess risks on their services, including risks linked to disinformation, and an obligation to take adequate mitigation measures which could include the code of practice on disinformation. New obligations will also impose independent third-party audits on the compliance of the code, a binding new set of transparency rules and a tool kit to scrutinise platforms' disinformation related content moderation actions.



The **code of practice on disinformation permanent Task Force** steers the work of the code's multi-stakeholder signatory base, fostering cooperation and aiming at evolving and adapting the code. The Task Force will notably look into devising strong responses to crisis situations, such as the continued disinformation surrounding COVID and the Russian war against Ukraine. CONNECT will also contribute to the review of the **European democracy action plan** which will be part of the defence of European democracy package.



CONNECT will continue to support a multidisciplinary community to fight disinformation through the activities of the **European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO)**. **Six new regional EDMO hubs** will ensure full geographical coverage of the EU, and increase the capacity to detect, analyse and expose disinformation, prepare media literacy campaigns that are tailored to local needs and support monitoring the actions taken by platforms against disinformation. CONNECT will also support through the *Horizon Europe programme* the development of **artificial intelligence-based tools that help media professionals and citizens to assess the veracity of online content** in the fight against disinformation.

Further to the adoption of the **European media freedom act** proposal, CONNECT will support the co-legislators achieving an agreement. By safeguarding the integrity of the internal market for media services, the European media freedom act will help improving media freedom and pluralism, strengthen the rule of law and democratic standards. It envisages safeguards against political interference in editorial decisions and against surveillance. It puts a focus on the independence and stable funding of public service media as well as on the transparency of media ownership and of the allocation of state advertising. The proposal also sets forth requirements for the national regulatory measures and the assessment of impact of media concentrations on media freedom and pluralism. Moreover, the act creates an independent European Board for Media Services, comprised of the national media regulators, to strengthen cooperation at EU level, including against foreign propaganda, and to help implement the rules. The Commission also adopted a **complementary Recommendation** to encourage internal safeguards for editorial independence and to further strengthen ownership transparency in the media sector. The Recommendation applies immediately and is expected to lead to positive developments in the internal media market in the short term. In addition, a combination of a Regulation and a Recommendation allows taking into account specificities of media regulation and self-regulation at the EU level and in the Member States.

CONNECT will coordinate the **media freedom and pluralism part of the 2023 annual rule of law report**, which the Commission has annually published since 2020. The report consists of a Communication and a detailed report, containing recommendations for each Member State.

Under the European democracy action plan, CONNECT will publish an independent **study on the application by Member States of the recommendation on safety of journalists** and will keep on monitoring the **pilot projects and preparatory actions to support media freedom and pluralism** financed by the Commission.

CONNECT will complete the checks on the transposition and implementation of the **audiovisual media services Directive (AVMSD)**. It will also publish a report on the application of AVMSD. CONNECT will continue actively supporting the Ukrainian authorities regarding the draft media law, to ensure that it is aligned with the AVMSD, while providing support and monitoring national measures adopted against Russian channels disseminating

disinformation and propaganda and cooperating with DG Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union regarding the relevant EU sanctions.

The **Creative Europe-MEDIA** subprogramme has become an established pillar of European cinema and audiovisual, supporting collaboration and reaching audiences across borders. With a 2023 budget of approximately EUR 181 million, the support schemes will support content (films, television series, extended reality, and videogames), audiences (cinemas, festivals, film promotion) and business (skills and training, innovative tools, cross-border film distribution, film markets). The *Creative Europe cross-sectoral strand* provides structured support for the **transformation of the news media** through collaborative partnerships, media freedom and media literacy, for approximate EUR 14 million per year. Support is also given to innovation through the **creative innovation lab**, for approximately EUR 5 million.

Key actions of the **media and audiovisual action plan** for 2023 include MediaInvest - an equity investment platform aiming to leverage EUR 400 million. A greening initiative aiming to establish a common carbon calculator will be procured and a Media Outlook Report will be published early 2023 to analyse industrial and technological trends and their impact on the European media market and business models.

The Commission will continue to support the **availability and access to European news content** through its multimedia actions budget line, to provide citizens with information about European issues from pan-European points of view. This line is increasingly open to competition, in order to reach out more European citizens and taking into account the new opportunities offered by the digital transformation. While **Euronews** will continue receiving support in 2023, the Commission will seek to fund an increasingly diverse range of news sources.

As a follow-up to the European Parliament's resolution on the challenges of sport event organisers, CONNECT will work on the preparation of the **Recommendation on piracy of live content**. The recommendation will set out how the existing legal tools should be applied to fight the illegal streaming of live events, including live sport events.



Following the judgment of the European Court of Justice in case C-265/19 and the analysis of its effects on the distribution of equitable remuneration for music performers and producers, CONNECT will continue working towards a legislative proposal amending existing rules on the **remuneration of third country recorded music played in the EU** to safeguard the level-playing field.

CONNECT will also continue monitoring the implementation of the **Directive on copyright** in the digital single market and the Directive on online television and radio programmes.

CONNECT will work on the **evaluation of the Marrakesh Directive and Regulation**, which facilitate the use of certain copyright-protected works for persons who are blind, visually impaired or otherwise print-disabled. It will also issue a report on the application of the 2011 **Directive on the term of protection of copyright and certain related rights**.

On the international front, CONNECT will continue to participate and drive forward the copyright negotiations in the framework of World Intellectual Property Organisation, in particular regarding the Broadcasting Treaty.

CONNECT will continue monitoring the implementation of the Directive on web accessibility in the public sector and will finalise assessing the conformity of the national laws transposing this directive in 2023.



To strengthen protection and empowerment of children online, as a key action under the new European strategy for a better internet for kids (BIK+), the Commission will launch work for a **comprehensive EU code of conduct on age-appropriate design**, building on the framework provided in the digital services act.

To empower people to master digital media and to ensure human compatible and ecologically conscious uses of digital in the spirit of the new European Bauhaus, the programme **S+T+ARTS, innovation at the nexus of science, technology and the ARTS** will encourage artistic experimentation with digital under the *Horizon Europe programme*.

External communication will cover media freedom and pluralism with the European media freedom act. In this, CONNECT will also work with the European Commission Representations to address particular concerns of different Member States.

CONNECT will continue producing innovative and attractive audio-visual content to engage youth in important discussions on the digital transformation that affect their daily lives. CONNECT aims to take our collaboration with the learning corner, managed by DG Communication, to the next level and empower teachers by producing modular teaching kits, so that they can regularly introduce digital topics in their classrooms.

In the context of the Russian war against Ukraine, CONNECT will continue communication on disinformation together with the other services, especially with DG Communication and the European External Action Service.

The relevant performance table can be found in the Annex ([page 48](#)).

PART 2. Modernising the administration: main outputs for 2023

The internal control framework ⁽⁴⁾ supports sound management and decision-making. It notably ensures that risks to the achievement of objectives are taken into account and reduced to acceptable levels through cost-effective controls.

CONNECT has established an internal control system tailored to its particular characteristics and circumstances. The effective functioning of the service's internal control system will be assessed on an ongoing basis throughout the year and be subject to a specific annual assessment covering all internal control principles.

A. Human resource management



To ensure the effective management of human resources and optimise the capacity to deliver on the priorities set out in its Strategic Plan, **CONNECT will implement its recently updated local human resources (HR) strategy**, in accordance with the overall corporate HR strategy.

To **ensure gender balance** at all management levels by end of 2024, CONNECT will seek to ensure gender-balance appointments to middle management posts. To this end, while promoting diversity and inclusion principles, CONNECT is specifically focusing efforts on supporting AD women for potential managerial careers at all levels (e.g., further focus on appointments of women to Deputy Head of Unit and Head of Sector posts and designation of 55% female Heads of Unit to deputise for Directors). In this context, the DG will complement the corporate management development offer with targeted initiatives to build up a managerial pipeline of women (e.g., local 360° evaluation and follow-up of the 2021 local female talent development programme).

In accordance with the Commission's corporate policies, CONNECT will seek to promote **learning & development**, with an emphasis on the most relevant skills required by the new legislative and policy-making activities that resulted from the new political priorities to make 'Europe fit for the Digital Age'. Additionally, the active diversity and inclusion network, which is chaired by a Director, regularly discusses topics of concern to staff and takes actions for improvement (e.g., annual diversity and inclusion days, new working methods). Besides fighting discrimination in the workplace, CONNECT is also active in the Equality Task Force. The DG's equality mainstreaming action plan (which will be renewed in 2023) identifies activities to prevent and tackle digital discrimination.

With a view to maintaining a high level of staff satisfaction in the DG, despite the many on-going human resources challenges, CONNECT will implement the local initiatives stemming

⁽⁴⁾ [Communication C\(2017\)2373 - Revision of the Internal Control Framework](#).

from the follow up action plan in response to the staff satisfaction survey launched by DG Human Resources and Security at the end of 2021. These concrete actions aim to address some of the main challenges in CONNECT related to workload, work-life balance, adjustment to the new ways of working in the dynamic collaborative environment, career and professional future (e.g. promotion of the local 'Smart Working' manifesto, continuation of the working group supporting the move to the new L-51 building, promotion of contract agent opportunities, local career development programmes such as 360°, pre-management coaching, or local female talent development programme, simplification of procedures...)

In terms of **internal communication**, CONNECT is also pursuing the 'We are CONNECT' staff engagement campaign to increase the sense of belonging to CONNECT and to ensure that colleagues are better aware of the DG activities and achievements. Within this context, CONNECT will further invest in developing CONNECT University sessions, aiming at sharing knowledge about the digital transformation steered by CONNECT and enhancing the take up of digital skills both internally and externally. Within the spirit of the development of learning paths as set out in the new human resources strategy, CONNECT University will closely cooperate with the EU Policymaking Hub.

CONNECT will also closely monitor and follow up on the **resource implications** that stem from the envisaged budget implementation modes under the multiannual financial framework 2021-2027. With an increasingly difficult HR-situation, this entails a fair, DG-internal distribution of decreased staffing levels as a result of, in particular, the cuts in DG resources following their redeployment to an enlarged research family and the (partial) delegation of budget management to executive agencies and/or joint undertakings. It also includes a fair, DG-internal allocation of resources to cope with significantly increasing workload on the policy front and on the in-house implementation activities in areas where budget is likely to increase, whilst exhausting all internal redeployment possibilities and exploring all possible internal efficiency gains.

Last but not least, CONNECT will also suggest some **changes to its organisational chart** to ensure that CONNECT's organisational structure meets the challenges that the implementation of the digital services and markets acts, and the digital decade policy programme will bring, taking into account increased staffing levels while achieving further efficiency gains and improving the ways of working together internally. In particular, CONNECT proposes to change the mandate of the current Directorate F and its units in order to be entirely dedicated to the regulation of online platforms. As a consequence, some of the current tasks of Directorate F will be re-assigned within CONNECT; with a particular impact on Directorate B which will focus on the implementation and coordination work linked to the digital decade, including the integration of the coordination of CONNECT's contribution to the implementation of the recovery and resilience facility as well as on connectivity.

Objective: CONNECT employs a competent and engaged workforce and contributes to gender equality at all levels of management to effectively deliver on the Commission's priorities and core business.

Main outputs in 2023:

Output	Indicator	Target
Gender balance in CONNECT	Number of first female appointments to middle management positions	3 first female appointments for CONNECT by end of 2022
Local female talent development programme		
360° evaluation	Number of women designated as Head of Unit and percentage (baseline: 15 (37%) on 01/12/2019)	Increase (>37%, >15)
Staff Engagement Index	Staff Engagement Index	Staff engagement index of 72% (+/- 5%) in line with Commission average - at next Staff Survey
Follow-up action plan in response to the staff satisfaction survey, launched by DG Human Resources and Security at the end of 2021, related to workload, work-life balance, adjustment to the new ways of working in the dynamic collaborative environment, career and professional future.		
'We are CONNECT' staff engagement campaign		
CONNECT University sessions		
Learning & Development Strategy tailored to the skills/ competences/ knowledge required for the delivery of our operational and political priorities	L&D priorities to be adopted as part of the overall HR strategy for CONNECT, in accordance with the Commission's corporate policies,	Endorsement by the Management Team of the 2023 L&D priorities

B. Sound financial management

CONNECT implements its activities directly by the DG and through the executive agencies, i.e., the European Health and Digital Executive Agency (HaDEA), the European Research Executive Agency (REA), the European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA), and the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). In indirect management, it supervises entities to which it delegates policy or budget implementation tasks, i.e., decentralised agencies: European Union Cybersecurity Agency (ENISA) and the Office for support the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC Office) and joint undertakings: the Key Digital Technologies (KDT) Joint Undertaking, and the European High-Performance Computing (EuroHPC) Joint Undertaking. The Smart Networks and Services (SNS) Joint Undertaking and the European Cybersecurity and Competence Centre (ECCC), a Union body for which CONNECT is the main partner DG, will become financially autonomous and start their activities towards the end of 2023. Until then, CONNECT is implementing these entities' budget implementation and other tasks.

CONNECT entrusted, under indirect management, funds for financial instruments to the European Investment Bank Group. In the area of connectivity, financial instruments under *Connecting Europe Facility* were entrusted to the European Investment Bank. In the areas of cultural and creative sectors (under *Creative Europe*), of strategic digital technologies and of semi-conductors (both under the *Digital Europe programme*), CONNECT entrusted the management of the financial instruments to the European Investment Fund, financed through blending the resources of InvestEU programme with specific funding programmes. Under the InvestEU framework, CONNECT exercises the political overview on the implementation of the different debt and equity instruments and DG Economic and Financial Affairs is responsible for financial and organisational matters, as well as monitoring and reporting tasks, including financial reporting.

CONNECT has also entrusted budget to the European Space Agency, the European Organisation for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites, the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts, and to the United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs.

CONNECT is responsible for the implementation of several programmes of the current multiannual financial framework (MFF): the *Digital Europe programme*, *Connecting Europe Facility - Digital*, the framework programme for research, *Horizon Europe*, and *Creative Europe - MEDIA*, and of programmes of the previous MFF 2014-2020. Year 2023 will be a year of full-speed implementation of the programmes of the current MFF, while activities related to the previous MFF will be phasing out. Controls are put in place to ensure the legality and regularity of transactions and the sound financial management.

CONNECT adapted the DG's internal control systems to the new portfolio of programmes (including the new MFF programmes), to the new delegation of programmes to its entrusted entities and to the new environment. **Internal control action plans** were adopted for three priority areas (for the *Digital Europe programme*, for the *Connecting Europe Facility - Digital* and for the establishment of the European Cybersecurity Competence Centre). Their implementation continues to be monitored during 2023.

CONNECT, as lead DG for the *Digital Europe programme*, whose implementation involves several implementing bodies and various implementation mechanisms prepared the **DG's control strategy** for the programme which documents the strategy and the focus of the controls to be implemented by CONNECT for the management of the programme (under direct management and through entrusted entities). It is accompanied by an action plan which is under implementation, also during 2023.

Aside from the results of the control efforts, expressed in terms of error rates, the control outputs of CONNECT must also meet other legal requirements of the financial Regulation, namely: time-to-grant (time elapsed between the call deadline and the signature of the grant agreement), time-to-inform (time elapsed between the call deadline and when applicants are informed of the outcome of the scientific evaluation) and time-to-pay (time elapsed between the payment request and the payment itself). These constitute major

performance indicators of the DG and respecting them contributes to the regularity of the operations.

Finally, with the entry into force of the digital services and markets acts, CONNECT will establish the necessary regulatory structures and capacities inside the DG to enable the effective enforcement of these new rules. The DG will set up cost-effective control systems and structures to cater for the new activities.

Objective: The authorising officer by delegation has reasonable assurance that resources have been used in accordance with the principles of sound financial management and that cost-effective controls are in place which give the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of underlying transactions.

Main outputs in 2023:

Output	Indicator	Target
Effective controls: Legal and regular transactions	Estimated risk at payment and at closure for Horizon 2020 grants	As close as possible to 2%
	Estimated risk at payment and at closure for Horizon Europe grants	Below 2% ⁽⁵⁾
	Estimated overall risk at payment and at closure	Below 2%
Efficient controls	Budget execution and / or timely payments	remains > 95% of payment appropriations and remains > 95% of payments (in value) on time
Economy of controls	Overall estimated cost of controls	remains < 4% of funds managed

C. Fraud risk management



CONNECT developed and has been implementing its anti-fraud strategy since 2009, following the methodology provided by the European Anti-Fraud Office. A new anti-fraud strategy for the period 2022-2024 was adopted in January 2022 and complements the Commission anti-fraud strategy and the Research family anti-fraud strategy. It is accompanied by an action plan, which aims to mitigate the fraud risks identified during the fraud risk assessment. It takes into account the new portfolio of CONNECT, including the programmes of the multiannual financial framework (MFF) 2021-2027 and the legacy (i.e., programmes of the previous MFF).

CONNECT also follows and implements the common anti-fraud strategy in the Research family and its action plan, which were last updated in 2019. The implementation of the

⁽⁵⁾ No representative error rate for Horizon Europe will be available in 2023 as the ex-post audit campaign for the Programme will start at the earliest end of 2023.

action plan is regularly monitored by the Steering Board and the Executive Committee of the Common Implementation Centre and the Fraud and Irregularities in Research Committee. In addition, in 2023 CONNECT will continue to contribute to the implementation of the Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy (CAFS) and its action plan.

Fraudulent cost claims in grant agreements are the main sectorial fraud risk. To tackle this risk, CONNECT is part of the Fraud and Irregularities in Research Committee, the main platform of coordination between the Research family members in the field of anti-fraud. The Committee's action is complemented by the local antifraud correspondents' working meetings and a common anti-fraud training session and common tools (guidance, information technology developments). CONNECT will continue to implement awareness campaigns and deliver training sessions on anti-fraud topics, especially related to grant management.

In terms of relations with other stakeholders, CONNECT will continue the good cooperation with the other members of the Research family and will work closely with DG Budget, the Legal Service, the Secretariat-General, the European Anti-Fraud Office, and the European Public Prosecutor's Office, in order to notify all fraud suspicions identified, and to implement all the recommendations.

Objective: The risk of fraud is minimised through the application of effective anti-fraud measures and the implementation of the Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy (CAFS) ⁽⁶⁾ aimed at the prevention, detection and correction ⁽⁷⁾ of fraud.

Main outputs in 2023:

Output	Indicator	Target
Implementation of the anti-fraud strategies (Research family anti-fraud strategy and CONNECT's)	% of implementation actions planned in the anti-fraud strategies	100%
Participation in the Fraud and Irregularities in Research Committee (FAIR)	Number of meetings	2
Fraud risk awareness raising training and similar anti-fraud training sessions	Number of sessions for staff involved in procurement and grant management for less than 2 years	At least one fraud risk awareness raising training session per year
Cooperation with OLAF	Participation in the Fraud Prevention and Detection Network meetings (FPDnet)	Participation in all network meetings

⁽⁶⁾ Communication from the Commission 'Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy: enhanced action to protect the EU budget', COM(2019) 196 of 29 April 2019 – 'the CAFS Communication' – and the accompanying action plan, SWD(2019) 170 – 'the CAFS Action Plan'.

⁽⁷⁾ Correction of fraud is an umbrella term, which notably refers to the recovery of amounts unduly spent and to administrative sanctions.

D. Digital transformation and information management

Digital transformation



Policymaking and regulatory work heavily rely on authoritative and quality data, information, and knowledge. For digital policies, this is even more the case due to their inherent local and global dimensions. In CONNECT, the activity is organised and managed in the framework of the implementation of the **next generation digital Commission and its declinations** like the data strategy. We give particular attention to the actionable side of such strategies for example with the digital solution modernisation plans to which we have actively contributed with ideas and proposals on key areas – namely, Data4Policy@EC, the Right2Innovate, stakeholder engagement and paperless organisation. In 2023, the activity on digital **transformation and digital culture** in CONNECT will further consolidate lessons learnt, good practices and new initiatives resulting from the COVID-19 crisis, including the forthcoming human resources strategy and the rolling out of the recovery and resilience facility.

On the **Right2Innovate**, CONNECT will continue to assist with automated text processing and dash-boarding capabilities to efficiently handle data lakes and large quantities of documents. The harmonisation and the optimisation of CONNECT's processes will encourage the definition of clear business needs, optimise business and administration processes in the early stages of **policymaking**. This activity will also serve to improve internal paperless and collaboration processes with concrete tools, i.e., a collaboration blueprint and a community supporting it. CONNECT will continue working on the kohesio open data dashboard and leverage these experiences in support of monitoring digital decade indicators, that are aligned with the business intelligence (BI@EC) strategic approach as part of the data strategy action plan.

CONNECT's **in-house data analytics capacity** will continue to serve internal needs; for instance, to process large quantities of stakeholder feedback data, in particular with regard to *Connecting Europe Facility - Digital*, *Horizon Europe* and *Digital Europe* programmes.

EC Collab, the Commission wide project to harmonize communication, collaboration and knowledge management mainly within Microsoft365, has matured further and is used now by over 60% of the staff. With the foreseen phase out of Connected and SharePoint on Premise in 2023, we started to work on the next Microsoft365 intranet based on processes and policies rather than on organisation entities; we will complete this work by the end of the first quarter 2023. Dedicated information sessions and trainings for managers and staff have already started and will be intensified in 2023 with the goal to maximise the new ways of working in Microsoft365.

As regards records management, the document management officer (DMO) regularly informs and reminds CONNECT's staff about rules, procedures and practices. The network of document management correspondents acts as a bridge between the DMO and the services. In its additional role as Centre d'Administration des Documents (CAD) team leader,

the DMO ensures that the services implement the rules, procedures and practices, and follows closely the actions in the framework of the **digital preservation strategy**.

Leveraging the experience gained in developing the EU digital COVID certificate system, CONNECT will make use of **hybrid cloud solutions** to meet increasing business needs and support the implementation and execution of European digital policies also by providing the Member States with specific information technology systems (IT) or reference implementation to be procured and developed at European level. This will certainly be the case for the development of the European digital identity wallet, the digital services act/digital markets act and, last but not least, the digital decade policy programme.

Information and IT security rules

The leakage of sensitive information causes significant damage to the work and the reputation of the institution. It undermines the principle of collegiality and loyalty on which our working methods are based. Leakage cases during the preparation of major policy files have highlighted the importance of tackling the issue and put in place mitigation measures: collaborative platforms and spaces, when needed, the structure of spaces is reviewed, and access rights and responsibilities changed. Regular communication and awareness campaigns to space administrators and staff are carried out:

- DG Human Resources and Security IT, information and document security training is mandatory for all newcomers;
- CONNECT welcome ABC-IT-Training is mandatory for all newcomers. It includes information on collaboration platform and introduces Ares & AresLook, Eurolook, SECEM, sensitive non-classified markings;
- the Circabc register, where comitology documents are archived, offers a non-public part, with restricted access, where sensitive documents/sensitive information, such as Member States-related documents, can be stored in closed folder.

In addition to that, further actions are planned:

- contract procured to reinforce the information security culture in CONNECT and that will develop a roadmap and pilot actions to achieve continuing, measurable improvements;
- building on the results of the contract above and in cooperation with corporate services (i.e., Secretariat-General, DG Human Resources and Security, and DG Informatics), an overall information security campaign for DG will be organised;
- for the IT systems owned by CONNECT, IT security, risks and compliance will be managed through the systematic use of corporate applications and services;
- the secure UE terminal will be operational in the new building L-51.

Data, information and knowledge management

On DataStrategy@EC, CONNECT will:

- structure our internal data governance to create a community of practice around use of data for policy making. We will thus strengthen an opportune training map for policy officers and create opportunities of exchange of ideas and learning;
- continue to offer internally and to other DGs tools and services developed for data analysis (Doris public consultation dashboard, drive-in, chatbot, knowledge graph technology, machine learning services ...). In addition, we will also widen the use of the corporate data platform and participate in pilot projects like the evidence bases tool for improving impact assessments;
- in the context of the corporate data governance and data policies, CONNECT will implement the core principles for data management, data interoperability and standards, data quality and data protection and information security.

Data protection

With the entry into force of Regulation (EU) 2018/1725, the Commission adopted the Commission's data protection action plan⁽⁸⁾, which identifies the main objectives and priorities to ensure compliance with the data protection rules.

CONNECT will continue working on the implementation of the action plan and its review. Furthermore, the operational controllers will ensure the completion of new records, together with the corresponding privacy statements, for those cases where new processing activities are identified and will annually review their existing records (and attached privacy statements).

A digitally transformed and data-driven Commission goes hand in hand with enhancing CONNECT staff's data protection knowledge. For this reason, awareness raising activities will continue. CONNECT will also draw up an action plan to ensure data protection in the context of the supervision and enforcement tasks set out in the digital services act.

Objective: CONNECT is using innovative, trusted digital solutions for better policy-shaping, information management and administrative processes to forge a truly digitally transformed, user-focused and data-driven Commission

Main outputs in 2023:

Output	Indicator	Target
Implementation of the corporate principles for data governance for CONNECT's key data assets	Percentage of implementation of the corporate principles for data governance for CONNECT's key data assets	Interim milestone by 2023: 75%

⁽⁸⁾ C(2018) 7432 final.

Output	Indicator	Target
Implementation of the corporate principles for IT security and compliance	Frequency of update of the IT security plans Implementation of all IT priority controls (in particular MFA/EU Login is compliant or attested as exempt).	Every 2 years for IT security plans IT priority controls are implemented and attested in the GRC corporate application
Implementation of the corporate principles for data governance	Nomination of Data Stewards across CONNECT Regular meeting of the Data@connect network	70% of units having a data steward by Q4 2023 3 meetings of the network
Migration of business processes and essential content to the EC Collab (M365)	Closure of the Connected platform	Q4 2023
SUE terminal available in CONNECT	Operability of the terminal	Q2 2023
Implementation of the roadmap actions set out in the final report of the information security culture study	Percentage of implementation	20% completion of the roadmap actions by Q4 2023
Phasing out use of legacy tools inside CONNECT	Reduction in the use of emails in CONNECT by the end of 2023 Migrate away from SharePoint On-Premises to SPO	- 30% reduction in email usage - Migration completed in Q4 2023
DPC to organise tailor-made training sessions	Number of sessions organised	2 training sessions
	% of staff trained about the requirements of Regulation (EU) 2018/1725	75%
Establishing records for new processing operations	Percentage of new identified processing operations reflected in created records	100% of identified new processing operations
Reviewing existing records as required by the DPMS	Records identified by the DPMS as requiring review	100% of identified new processing operations
Drawing up an action plan for DP compliance in DMA-DSA supervision and enforcement tasks in CONNECT	Adoption of the action plan	Q4 2023

E. Sound environmental management



CONNECT has put in place and actively implements a series of actions which aim to contribute to the Commission's objective of reducing its environmental footprint and to become climate neutral by 2030. Guided by the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS), CONNECT's main actions will focus on:

- energy saving by participating in energy saving actions, such as lowering of the heating temperature inside CONNECT buildings to maximum 19°C and end of the year closure of buildings and stimulating the use of environmentally friendly means of transportation and by facilitating the use of IT solutions for meetings;
- paper, energy and water reduction consumption by promoting internal awareness raising actions with staff;
- increase of staff awareness on how daily actions (both inside and outside the workplace) can benefit the environment, by using of the Green@CONNECT space, as well as a regular CONNECT newsletter and the Diversity and Inclusion Group, to further promote a number of internal and corporate initiatives.

Objective: CONNECT takes account of its environmental impact in their actions and actively promotes measures to reduce the related day-to-day impact of the administration and its work, with the support their respective EMAS Correspondents/EMAS Site Coordinators.

Main outputs in 2023:

I. More efficient use of resources (energy, water, paper):

Output	Indicator	Target
Participation in corporate energy saving actions	Number of DG buildings participating in end of year energy saving actions	1 DG building participating
Staff awareness actions to reduce energy, water and paper use in the framework of EMAS corporate campaigns and/or awareness actions	Number of actions related to energy and water consumption, and paperless working methods	2 for each

II. Reducing CO₂, equivalent CO₂ and other atmospheric emissions

Output	Indicator	Target
Optimise and gradually reduce CO ₂ emissions related to staff trips	CO ₂ emissions from staff trips	50% reduction of emissions
Staff awareness actions on reducing GHG emissions: - sustainable commuting during EU Mobility week and VeloWalk - availability of service bikes, bike parking facilities, lockers and showers	Percentage of staff informed/participating	100 % of staff informed/participating
Staff awareness actions on digital pollution	Number of events organised	1

III. Reducing and management of waste

Output	Indicator	Target
--------	-----------	--------

Implementation of the EC Guidelines for sustainable meetings and events	Percentage of green events	100%
Staff awareness actions about waste reduction and sorting in the framework of EMAS corporate campaigns	Percentage of staff informed/participating	100%

F. Initiatives to improve economy and efficiency of financial and non-financial activities

CONNECT will suggest some changes to its organisational chart to ensure that it meets the challenges that the implementation of the digital services and markets acts, and the digital decade policy programme will bring, while achieving further efficiency gains and improving the ways of working together internally. In particular, CONNECT wishes to change the mandate of the current Directorate F and its units in order to be entirely dedicated to the regulation of online platforms. As a consequence, some of the current tasks of Directorate F will be re-assigned within CONNECT; with a particular impact on Directorate B which will focus on connectivity and the digital decade and integrate the coordination of CONNECT's contribution to the implementation of the recovery and resilience facility.

The July 2022 move to the new L-51 building for Brussels-based staff has led to economies in terms of office space occupation. More importantly, the brand-new office is the perfect opportunity to maximise the benefits of the hybrid working arrangements and to engage CONNECT staff and managers in the transformation process of our working methods towards more flexibility and collaboration.

Thanks to increased collaborative spaces supported by adequate information technology and videoconferencing facilities, CONNECT expects more efficient collaboration when colleagues meet in the office, while offering the opportunity to stay at home to focus on non-collaborative tasks, thanks to the flexibility granted by the new working time decision.

These new working modes will lead to savings in terms of business trips, in particular for spending programmes where on-site reviews used to be frequent and can now more easily take place via videoconferencing facilities.

ANNEX: Performance tables

General objective: A Europe fit for the Digital Age

Specific objective 1: Europe's strategic autonomy is ensured in critical technology areas

Related to spending programmes:

Horizon Europe programme, Digital Europe programme and Connecting Europe Facility - Digital

Main outputs in 2023:

External communication actions

Output	Indicator	Target
Citizens having awareness of policy initiatives via CONNECT channels (main CONNECT policy website)*	Number of unique browsers (unique visitors) reading the main website	7 200 unique browsers
Increase the followers and engagement rate of the main of the DigitalEU channels, with focus on Instagram and LinkedIn*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Followers' growth Engagement rate Number of topic mentions Number of impressions per post 	<p>TWITTER: in 2023, increase the current baseline (around 121.7 thousand) by 13% and reach 137 thousand followers by the end of the year). Maintain the average of 4 thousand interactions per month.</p> <p>INSTAGRAM: In 2023, the account should continue to be our main focus for growth and reach 3 thousand new followers, while increasing the average interactions per post to 50.</p> <p>FACEBOOK: In 2023, maintain the 2022 increase of 31% in followers.</p> <p>LINKEDIN: In 2023, build on the launch in April 2022 and double our followership from the current 1.4 thousand.</p>
Web and social media indicators for external communication are cross-cutting through all strategic objectives (marked with *)		
Next Generation Internet Forum	Number of participants	300
Digital Mayors Assembly	Number of participants	200
Other important outputs		
Output	Indicator	Target
Chips act	Adoption by the co-legislator	Q2 2023 COM(2022)46 final 2022/0032 (COD) 08.02.2022
State of the digital decade report	Publication	Q2 2023

Output	Indicator	Target
Second important project of common European interest (IPCEI) on microelectronics	Launch of the IPCEI	Q2 2023
Implementation of contracts for 6G technology and systems exploratory projects under the Smart Networks and Services Joint Undertaking.	35 projects, EUR 248 million committed	Q1 2023
Selection of phase two Smart Networks and Services projects on selected technologies and large-scale pilots, including EU-US cooperation (as per TTC WG4)	26 projects, EUR 132 million committed, up to 5 mirror projects on US/NSF side	Q3 2023
Document on a global 6G vision framing global industrial developments and standards for the International Telecommunications Union International Mobile Telecommunications 2030 (ITU IMT 2030)	Publication	Q4 2023
Smart Networks and Services Joint Undertaking.	Establishment of the joint undertaking	Q3 2023
Regulatory sandbox for blockchain	Launch of the first cohort of 20 projects/companies	Q2 2023
Standard artificial intelligence procurement clauses for cities and communities	Publication	Q4 2023
Launch a 2nd wave of photonics projects under Horizon Europe cluster 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Launch 15 collaborative projects addressing the sustainability and performance goals of the partnership - Launch 1 flagship project for technology transfer to SMEs and mid-caps - Launch 1 pilot line project on silicon photonics 	Q4 2023
Delegated act on monitoring and evaluation framework for Digital Europe	Adoption of by the Commission	Q3 2023
Implementing Decision on the Digital Europe work programme for 2023 and 2024	Adoption by the Commission	Q1 2023

Output	Indicator	Target
European quantum communication infrastructure (EuroQCI) initiative	Launch of National QCI deployment projects supported by the Digital Europe programme.	Q1 2023
	Grant signatures under Connecting Europe Facility for cross-border linking of national quantum communication infrastructures	Q4 2023
Graphene - Launch projects under Horizon Europe cluster 4 to support the adoption of Graphene and 2D materials by industry	Launch of projects targeting specific application areas of Graphene and 2D materials	Q3 2023
Human Brain- Delivery of a cutting-edge research infrastructure (EBRAINS)	Launch of a project supporting the eBrain infrastructure	Q3 2023
Horizon Europe – Cluster 3 calls	Launch of the calls	Q2 2023
Horizon Europe – Cluster 4 calls	Launch of the calls	Q4 2023
Digital Europe - open of the first calls of the 2023-2024 work programme	Call ready for submission in the Funding and Tenders Portal	Q2 2023

General objective: A Europe fit for the Digital Age

Specific objective 2: A European single market for data where data can flow for the benefit of all and where the rules for access and use of data are fair, practical and clear

Related to spending programmes:

Horizon Europe programme, Digital Europe programme and Connecting Europe Facility - Digital

Main outputs in 2023:

Enforcement actions

Output	Indicator	Target
Report on the implementation of the free flow of non-personal data	Adoption by the Commission	Q1 2023

External communication actions

Output	Indicator	Target
For the cross-cutting external communications actions see rows 1 and 2 of the table of outputs of specific objective 1 (marked with *)		

Other important outputs

Output	Indicator	Target
--------	-----------	--------

Output	Indicator	Target
Data act	Adoption by the co-legislator	Q2 2023 COM(2022)68 final 2022/0047 (COD) 23.02.2022
Implementing Regulation on high value datasets	Adoption by the Commission	Q1 2023
Plenary and Forum of the Alliance for Industrial Data, Edge and Cloud	Delivery	Q2 2023 and Q4 2023
Updated European industrial technology roadmap for the next generation cloud-edge offering	Publication	Q1 2023
Guidance on common standards & requirements for the public procurement of data processing services	Publication	Q1 2023
Non-paper on cloud requirements for the aerospace and security industry	Publication	Q1 2023
A reference framework for an energy saving application as stated in the digitalising the energy system - EU action plan	Delivery	Q1 2023
EU online marketplace for federated cloud-to-edge based services	Launch of implementation	Q1 2023
EU cloud rulebook	Publication	Q1 2023
SIMPL – minimum viable product	Delivery	Q4 2023
Updated models for measuring and mapping volume and economic values of cloud data flows	Delivery	Q4 2023
Finalisation of the important project of common European interest on next generation cloud infrastructure and services (IPCEI-CIS) technical assessment	Delivery	Q2/Q3 2023
Set up of the European Data Innovation Board, as required in the data governance act	Formal set up of the Board	Q3 2023
Edge Computing Observatory	Establishment	Q1 2023



General objective: A Europe fit for the Digital Age**Specific objective 3: Artificial intelligence that is human-centric, ethical, sustainable and that respects EU values***Related to spending programmes:**Horizon 2020 programme, Horizon Europe programme and Digital Europe programme***Main outputs in 2023:****External communication actions**

Output	Indicator	Target
4th European artificial intelligence assembly	Number of participants	300-350 if in-situ 800-1000 if online or hybrid
For the cross-cutting external communications actions see rows 1 and 2 of the table of outputs of specific objective 1 (marked with *)		

Other important outputs

Output	Indicator	Target
Proposal for a Regulation laying down requirements for artificial intelligence (AI act)	Adoption by the co-legislators	Q3 2023 COM(2021)206 final 2021/0106 (COD) 21.04.2021
Mandate for artificial intelligence standardisation	Adoption by the Commission	Q1 2023
Member States' group on artificial intelligence and digitisation of business	2 High-level meetings + 2 or 3 meetings of the subgroups on sandboxes, standardisation and sustainability	Q1 and Q3 2023
Network of next generation artificial intelligence excellence centres	Project start date	Q3 2023
Launch of the strategic research innovation and deployment agenda on artificial intelligence, data and robotics	Publication by the artificial intelligence, data and robotics Partnership	Q1 2023
Launch of sectorial testing and experimentation facilities (healthcare, agri-food, manufacturing, smart cities)	Project start state	Q1 2023
Consolidation of the artificial intelligence -on-demand platform as a central European toolbox of artificial intelligence resources needed for industry and public sector uses	Project start date	Q4 2023
Launch the third wave of Connecting Europe Facility grants	Launch of the call (283 EUR million budget)	Q4 2023

General objective: A Europe fit for the Digital Age**Specific objective 4: A fair, competitive and resource efficient digital economy***Related to spending programmes:**Horizon Europe programme, Digital Europe programme and
Connecting Europe Facility - Digital***Main outputs in 2023:****New policy initiatives**

Output	Indicator	Target
 New radio spectrum policy programme (RSPP 2.0)	Adoption by the Commission	Q3 2023
 Initiative on virtual worlds, such as metaverse	Adoption by the Commission	Q2 2023

Public consultations

Output	Indicator	Target
Public consultation for the review of the roaming fair use policy	Start of the public consultation	Q2/Q3 2023

External communication actions

Output	Indicator	Target
For the cross-cutting external communications actions see rows 1 and 2 of the table of outputs of specific objective 1 (marked with *)		

Other important outputs

Output	Indicator	Target
Proposal for a Council Decision on the Union Position for the ITU World Radiocommunication Conference 2023 (WRC-23)	Adoption by the Commission	Q1 2023
Gigabit infrastructure act	Adoption by the Commission	Q1 2023
Gigabit Recommendation	Adoption by the Commission	Q2 2023
Contributions to the Council Recommendations on digital education and skills	Adoption by the Commission	Q1 2023
Commission Implementing Decision on the harmonisation of the 40.5-43.5 GHz frequency band for (5G) wireless broadband.	Adoption by the Commission	Q3/2023
Launch of a spectrum observatory (part of the 5G observatory), with focus on spectrum awards	Launch of Web site	Q3 2023
Trade and Technology Council with India	Launch of the Council	Q1 2023

Output	Indicator	Target
Review report on the Commission implementing Regulation on roaming fair use policies and sustainability derogations	Adoption by the Commission	Q2 2023
Evaluation of the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC) and BEREC's office performance by the Commission	Completion of the evaluation including the Staff Working document on the evaluation of BEREC and BEREC office	Q4 2023
Review of the recommendation: the next generation access (NGA)	Adoption by the Commission	Q2 2023
Review of the recommendation: non-discrimination and costing methodologies (NDCM) recommendations	Adoption by the Commission	Q2 2023
Launch the operation of the network of European digital innovation hubs (EDIH)	All EDIHs from the first call to be fully operational and connected through the digital transformation accelerator	Q4 2023
Launch a batch of projects under Horizon Europe cluster 4 on strategic digital technologies for manufacturing	Successful launch of the call for proposals with high quality proposals	Q4 2023
Rolling plan on information and communications technology standardisation	Publication	Q1 2023
Availability of agreed methodology to define 5G coverage in Europe	Target percentage and associated QoS indicators	Q4 2023
Adoption of delegated act implementing measurement framework for data centres under the energy efficiency Directive	Adoption by the Commission	Q4 2023
Assessment framework that will allow data centres to prove their compliance with the European code of conduct for energy efficiency in data centres – a criterion for being classified as environmentally sustainable under the EU taxonomy	Publication	Q1 2023
Website monitoring of uptake EU-wide of key internet standards	Launch of the website	Q1 2023
Launch of the DNS4EU project	Start of the project	Q1 2023
Establishment of the .eu Multistakeholder Advisory Group pursuant to Regulation EU 2019/517	Adoption by the Commission Decision and establishment of the group based on a call for selection	Q2 2023

Output	Indicator	Target
Designation of gatekeepers under the digital markets act	Adoption of related Commission Decisions	Q4 2023
Designation of very large online platforms and very large online search engines under the digital services act	Adoption of the related Commission Decisions	Q3 2023
Delegated Regulation for the methodology on the calculation of the supervisory fee for the digital services act	Enter into force of the delegated Regulation	Q3 2023
Consultation on standardisation activities for metaverse	Start of the citizens panel and sectoral workshops	Q1/Q2 2023

General objective: A Europe fit for the Digital Age


Specific objective 5: A cyber resilient Europe, promoting digital identities for all Europeans, while protecting their e-privacy

Related to spending programmes:

Horizon Europe programme and Digital Europe programme

Main outputs in 2023:

New policy initiatives

Output	Indicator	Target
 Cybersecurity skills academy	Adoption by the Commission	Q3 2023
Proposal for an EU cyber solidarity initiative	Adoption by the Commission	Q1 2023

External communication actions

Output	Indicator	Target
For the cross-cutting external communications actions see rows 1 and 2 of the table of outputs of specific objective 1 (marked with *)		

Other important outputs

Output	Indicator	Target
European digital identity (eID) Regulation	Adoption by co-legislators	Q3 2023 COM(2021)281 final 2021/0136 (COD) 03.06.2021
Cyber resilience act	Adoption by co-legislators	Q4 2023 COM(2022)454 final 2022/0272 (COD) 15.09.2022

Output	Indicator	Target
ePrivacy Directive	Adoption by co-legislators	Q4 2023 COM(2017)10 final 2017/0003 (COD) 10.01.2017
Guidelines clarifying the application of Article 4(1) and (2) of the network and information security 2 Directive	Issuing of guidelines by the Commission	Q2 2023
Conduct of a risk evaluation and building of risk scenarios from a cybersecurity perspective	Presentation to the Council	Q2 2023
Adoption of the European cloud security certification (EUCS) scheme	Adoption by the Commission	Q2 2023
Adoption of the European common criteria (EUCC) scheme	Adoption by the Commission	Q1 2023
Virtual cyber situation and analysis centre	Establishment of the centre	Q1 2023
Autonomy of the European Cybersecurity Competence Centre	Establishment of the centre	Q4 2023

General objective: A Europe fit for the Digital Age


Specific objective 6: A modern, open and pluralistic society in the digital age where online disinformation is countered and diverse cultural content is available to all Europeans

Related to spending programmes:

Horizon Europe programme and Creative Europe - MEDIA

Main outputs in 2023:

New policy initiatives

Output	Indicator	Target
 Recommendation on piracy of live content	Adoption by the Commission	Q2 2023

Evaluations and fitness checks

Output	Indicator	Target
Evaluation of the Marrakesh Directive and Regulation	Adoption by the Commission	Q4 2023
Review of the audiovisual media services Directive definition of European works	Adoption by the Commission	Q2 2023

Enforcement actions		
Output	Indicator	Target
Conformity checks of the audiovisual media services Directive	Finalisation of conformity checks (minimum 18 Member States)	Q4 2023
Conformity checks of the transposition of the web accessibility in the public sector,	Finalisation of conformity checks	Q3 2023
Verification on the transposition by Member States on the implementation of the online television and radio programmes Directive	Finalisation of conformity checks (minimum 12 MS)	Q4 2023
Verification on the transposition by Member States on the implementation of the copyright in the digital single market Directive	Finalisation of conformity checks (minimum 10 MS)	Q4 2023
External communication actions		
Output	Indicator	Target
For the cross-cutting external communications actions see rows 1 and 2 of the table of outputs of specific objective 1 (marked with *)		
Other important outputs		
Output	Indicator	Target
Assessment of the implementation of the Code of Practice	Publication	Q4 2023
Adoption of Creative Europe work programme 2024	Adoption by the Commission	Q3 2023
Calls for proposals under the Creative Europe-MEDIA work programme 2024	Launch of the calls	Q3 2023
Calls for proposals under the Creative Europe cross-sectoral work programme 2024	Launch of the calls	Q3 2023
Multimedia actions work programme 2024	Adoption by the Commission	Q1 2023
Euronews specific grant agreements	Signature of grant agreements	Q4 2023
Call for proposals for production of content on EU affairs	Launch of Call	Q2 2023
Media outlook report	Publication	Q1 2023
Report on the application of the audiovisual media services Directive	Publication	Q4 2023

Output	Indicator	Target
Study report on the application by Member States of the Recommendation on safety of journalists	Publication	Q3 2023
Launch work on the better internet for kids plus (BIK+) code of conduct on age-appropriate design	Set up of the special group	Q1 2023
Report on the 2011 Directive on term of protection of copyright	Publication	Q2 2023
European media freedom act	Adoption by co-legislators	Q4 2023 COM(2022)177 final 2022/0117(COD) 27.04.2022