European Commission

Management Plan
2026

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR

COMMUNICATIONS NETWORKS, CONTENT AND TECHNOLOGY

Contents

PART 1. Introduction

The **Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology** (CONNECT) is carrying forward and enforcing digital policies, developing the European vision for the digital transformation and delivering a broad set of programmes and standards.

Building on this role and given the increasingly complex environment in which Europe's digital transformation unfolds, CONNECT's mission is clear: to empower Europe to lead in the digital age – not only by regulating but by simplifying rules and enabling, innovating, and defending a digital transition that is competitive, sustainable, democratic, and sovereign. The road ahead requires unity of purpose, strategic clarity, and the collective resolve to act decisively.

To deliver on this mission, CONNECT works closely with decentralised agencies, namely the European Union Agency for Cybersecurity and the Office of the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications. The EU has also developed a network of digital partnerships and alliances with countries and regions around the world, allowing for concrete joint projects and initiatives in fields such as secure connectivity, artificial intelligence, semiconductors, digital public infrastructure, and platforms. To support the implementation of its policies and reach its objectives, CONNECT uses EU funding programmes and instruments that cover all aspects of the digital transformation, from fundamental research to deployment, while addressing digital skills gaps.
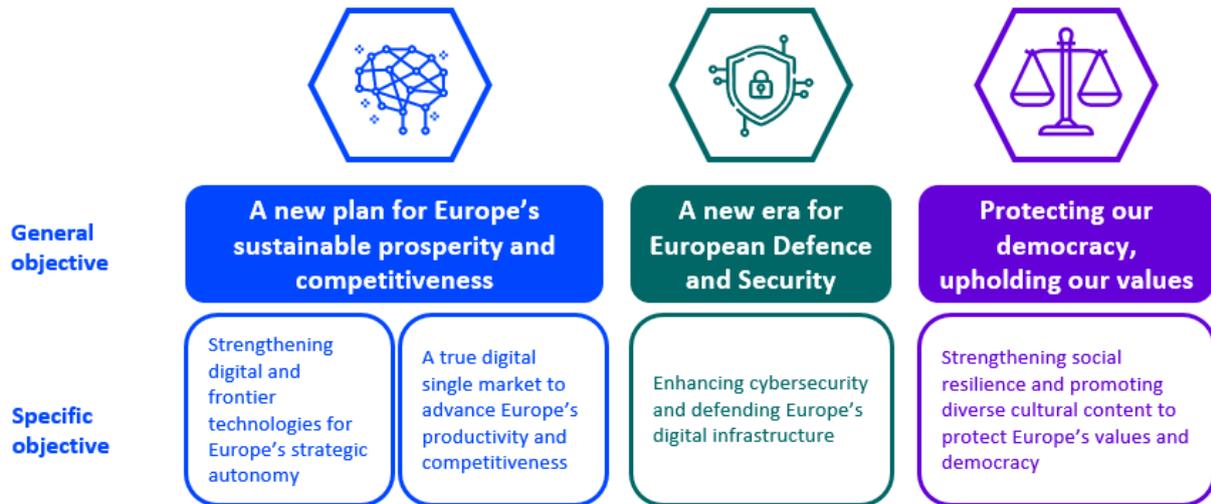
Strategic planning and programming is the cornerstone of the **Commission's performance management framework**. The Commission's strategic plan for 2025-2029 translates the political priorities set in the Political Guidelines of President von der Leyen into general objectives. This process ensures institutional coherence, enhances accountability, and aligns the actions of all Commission services with the strategic vision of the mandate.

Within this framework, each Commission service has developed a **strategic outlook for 2025-2029** in the Management Plan 2025. This outlook defines a set of multiannual objectives and indicators to measure progress towards their achievement. These will be used for planning and reporting on performance throughout the period.

The **2026 management plan** sets out what CONNECT intends to deliver this year to contribute to these multiannual objectives (part 2). It also describes how CONNECT will contribute to the common objective of building a modern and sustainable public administration (part 3). The main outputs with their indicators and targets are presented in Annexes 1 and 2. In 2025, the risk at closure is expected to be lower than the risk at payment due to the implementation of future recoveries and corrections.

The chart below illustrates the performance framework for CONNECT.

DG CONNECT STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2025-2029

General objective

A new plan for Europe's sustainable prosperity and competitiveness	A new era for European Defence and Security	Protecting our democracy, upholding our values

Specific objective

Strengthening digital and frontier technologies for Europe's strategic autonomy	A true digital single market to advance Europe's productivity and competitiveness	Enhancing cybersecurity and defending Europe's digital infrastructure	Strengthening social resilience and promoting diverse cultural content to protect Europe's values and democracy

PART 2. Delivering on the Commission's priorities in 2026

The **Digital Decade policy programme** ensures that the digital transformation serves the needs of people and businesses while making the EU more competitive and autonomous in the digital sphere. It aims to do this by improving the EU's digital infrastructure, supporting the digital transformation of businesses and public services, and promoting the development of digital skills. EU funding programmes are essential to reaching the Commission's objectives of fostering a robust and competitive digital economy. *Digital Europe* enhances digital infrastructures and capabilities, bolstering competitiveness and resilience while reducing administrative burden. *Horizon Europe* facilitates research and innovation to support the green and digital transitions that are essential for the EU's resilience and economic growth. *Connecting Europe Facility – Digital* tackles the need for high-capacity digital infrastructure, essential for creating a well-functioning digital economy and for building connectivity across Member States and with partner third countries, aligned with the EU's sustainability and economic stability goals. *Creative Europe – MEDIA* supports the competitiveness of the European content production industry by promoting cultural diversity and upholding European values in the digital world.

The **digital omnibus** streamlines EU digital legislation and supports innovation. It addresses barriers such as rigid legislation and the lack of enabling conditions and financing for businesses to scale up. It will make compliance easier, and maximise the impact of EU rules and will save businesses in the EU up to EUR 5 billion in administrative costs between now and 2029. The omnibus will improve access to data, simplify data rules and make them work better for consumers and businesses. It consolidates EU data rules under the Data Act, offering increased legal clarity and proposes new targeted exemptions to cloud-switching rules for small and mid-caps enterprises, and for providers of custom-made data processing services. It tackles cookie banner fatigue, improving the online experience for everyone in the EU and cutting cost for businesses. Targeted amendments to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) harmonise, clarify and simplify the EU's data protection rules to boost innovation, without changing its core objectives. On cybersecurity, the omnibus will introduce a single-entry point through which businesses can simultaneously fulfil their incident reporting obligations under multiple legal acts. The omnibus will address pressure points on the implementation of the Artificial Intelligence Act (AI Act), aiming for the quick conclusion of negotiations, to create legal certainty. Other measures, such as the AI Act Service Desk will further facilitate the application of the AI Act. The omnibus proposes the partial repeal of the Platform-to-Business Regulation. Businesses should see the EU as a place of innovation, opportunity, and trust. CONNECT will work on the **Digital Fitness Check** to stress-test the 'digital rulebook', analysing the interplay between the different rules affecting the digital area, their cumulative impact on businesses, and how effectively they jointly support the EU's competitiveness, values and fundamental rights. The Fitness check will inform further possible actions under the Commission's digital simplification agenda.

CONNECT will write an annual progress report on implementation and enforcement and continue to monitor the application of EU law in Member States. In particular, CONNECT will

monitor the implementation of the European Media Freedom Act and take action, if necessary. CONNECT pursues enforcement of missing nominations, empowerments and sanctions in the digital acquis.

General Objective 1
A new plan for Europe's sustainable prosperity and competitiveness

Specific Objective 1: Strengthening digital and frontier technologies for Europe's strategic autonomy

CONNECT will launch a **Frontier AI Initiative** to boost capabilities by bringing together Europe's leading industrial, research, and academic actors. It will explore advanced architectures and high-quality datasets, leveraging EU supercomputer infrastructures. It will support RAISE by managing a network of leading frontier AI labs. CONNECT will support the development of frontier AI models and intelligent agents for key economic sectors such as manufacturing and pharma, focusing on access to high-value data and acceleration pipelines. Taking into account the rise of physical AI, CONNECT will establish a **catalyst for European robotics** uptake, which will include Qualification Centres for robotic skills and foundation models for robotics. CONNECT will use bilateral cooperation and international fora to promote the European approach based on responsible innovation. Furthermore, CONNECT will advance **AI for public good** to address major societal challenges, such as improving healthcare, optimising energy use, and mitigating the impact of natural disasters.

CONNECT will prepare the **EU Quantum Act** to accelerate research and innovation (R&I), industrial deployment and supply-chain security across quantum technologies. The Quantum Europe R&I programme (2028–2034) will bridge the gap from 'lab-to-fab' and integrate quantum technologies into the European High Performance Computing Joint Undertaking (EuroHPC JU). CONNECT will work on the 'Quantum made in Europe' initiative, to scale up design centres, pilot lines and first-of-a-kind manufacturing aligned with the EU chips framework; and on implementing economic security measures for monitoring EU-wide supply-chains, standards and certification, and risk mitigation. CONNECT will carry out an impact assessment and targeted public consultations.

CONNECT will strengthen Europe's strategic autonomy in digital and frontier technologies, as well as in AI compute infrastructure. Together with the EuroHPC JU, CONNECT will enhance the **European network of AI factories and supercomputers** by supporting the establishment of AI-optimised compute infrastructures in AI factories, and additional supercomputers, including the second European exascale supercomputer ALICE RECOQUE. CONNECT will launch the call for expression of interest for the establishment of the first AI Gigafactories.

The **European Chips Act** strengthens the EU's strategic autonomy for semiconductors. CONNECT will finalise the implementing act on priority-rated orders and, where necessary, prepare Commission Decisions on the status of integrated production facilities and/or open EU foundries. It will monitor semiconductor supply chains to prevent crises. CONNECT will work with the Chips Joint Undertaking (Chips JU) to implement the Chips for Europe Initiative. It will cooperate with Member States via the **European Semiconductor Board** on economic security,

risk assessments, and other related topics. This work will also contribute to the evaluation and review of the Chips Act, as well as to the proposal for a Chips Act 2.0.

CONNECT will support research and innovation in **6G technology**, 5G standalone deployment, large-scale pilots on Telco-Edge-Cloud, and projects for connected and automated mobility. The focus will be on the consolidation and visibility of the Smart Networks and Services Joint Undertaking (SNS JU) results, future industrial capabilities (e.g. devices, AI, testbeds) and global positioning and strategic partnerships. CONNECT will work with industry to implement the 2025 **EU code of conduct for sustainable telecommunications networks**.

The **European quantum communication infrastructure (EuroQCI)** initiative aims to develop an end-to-end quantum communication infrastructure composed of both space and terrestrial-based assets and technologies, enabling information and data to be transmitted and stored in an ultra-secure way, and capable of linking critical public communication assets all over the EU, paving the way to the future quantum internet. The EuroQCI, currently being deployed in 26 Member States will be gradually integrated into the EU space-based secure communication system IRIS and its evolutions. *Connecting Europe Facility – Digital* will fund cross-border links between national networks and the deployment of optical ground stations for testing and demonstration of connections with the available space infrastructure. Under the **Union Secure Connectivity Programme**, projects will support the further development of European technologies for secure space and ground quantum communication and preparing for the certification of the most mature quantum communication technologies. The Commission and the European Space Agency prepare the launch of the first European demonstration satellite, Eagle 1. Work will continue on the deployment of the first and second generation of satellites and infrastructures that will form the EuroQCI's space segment, ensuring that its secure communication services cover the entire EU.

CONNECT will contribute to the EU digital sovereignty and competitiveness agenda by strengthening its technological independence at the software and service layer. In particular, it will prepare, jointly with the Directorate-General for Digital Services (DIGIT), a new **open-source strategy** to stimulate the development, maintenance and market uptake of open-source solutions, as well as a Commission corporate action plan for open source. CONNECT will cooperate with the newly established European Digital Infrastructure Consortium (EDIC) on Digital Commons to accelerate reusable open-source solutions and the further development of alternatives to proprietary solutions for the digital workplace, such as Open Desk and La Suite Numérique. CONNECT will establish, under *Horizon Europe*, the first pillar of the **Open Internet Stack** to support the development and maintenance of sovereign open-source building blocks to promote trust, transactions, connectivity and decentralisation.

The **Digital Decade policy programme** strengthens Europe's strategic autonomy by providing a legally binding governance framework that fosters coordination and promotes the development and uptake of strategic infrastructure and advanced digital technologies, such as AI, semiconductors, quantum technologies and advanced connectivity. These technologies are essential for securing the EU's technological sovereignty and global competitiveness. CONNECT will review the programme, aiming to simplify and reduce administrative burden. It will prepare

the fourth report on the **State of the Digital Decade** examining policy developments and offering targeted and horizontal recommendations to Member States to take collective action, including with regard to digital technologies and strategic autonomy.

Specific Objective 2: A true digital single market to advance Europe's productivity and competitiveness

CONNECT will implement the **AI Continent Action Plan** and the **Apply AI Strategy** to enhance the competitiveness of strategic sectors and strengthen the EU's technological sovereignty. It will build on the "AI first" policy – carefully balancing the benefits and risks of AI technologies – and promote a "buy European" approach, particularly within the public sector, with a focus on open-source AI solutions. This effort will be governed by the Apply AI Alliance and include sectoral flagships to accelerate AI adoption across 10 key industry sectors and the public sector and support measures to reinforce technological sovereignty, including the transformation of European Digital Innovation Hubs into Experience Centres for AI, the development of AI testing and experimentation facilities, AI regulatory sandboxes, and initiatives to build an AI-ready workforce.

Healthcare and pharmaceuticals are a priority under the Apply AI Strategy. CONNECT will launch flagship actions demonstrating the transformative power of AI. European AI-powered advanced screening centres will accelerate the deployment of diagnostic AI tools in hospitals and improve access to healthcare in underserved areas. In addition, virtual human twins will bring Europe closer to truly personalised care, faster diagnosis, better prevention, and safer treatments.

CONNECT will work on the implementation of the AI Act, strengthening legal certainty, trust and consistency across Europe. CONNECT will respond to queries of companies concerned via the AI Act Service Desk and issue guidelines on practical implementation. It will negotiate targeted amendments to the AI Act as part of the digital omnibus to address implementation challenges, such as clarifying its interplay with other legislation.

CONNECT will work with model providers to comply with the General-Purpose AI (GPAI) rules that are already applicable based on the **GPAI Code of Practice**. Enforcement powers will take effect in August 2026. To prepare, CONNECT is drafting an implementing regulation on proceedings for GPAI models providers. It is establishing a Scientific Panel of EU and international AI experts to get advice on technical matters related to enforcement.

CONNECT will negotiate the data-related provisions of the digital omnibus to deliver a coherent, simplified, and innovation-friendly regulatory framework. It will oversee the implementation of the **Data Act**, including the rollout of support measures such as the Data Act Legal Helpdesk. In parallel, it will advance the **Data Union Strategy** through flagship actions such as the launch of data labs, common data quality standards, and digital tools to automate compliance and reporting. CONNECT will also steer and monitor the implementation of **common European Data Spaces** to ensure coherence across sectors and alignment with the EU's industrial and research priorities, strengthening the EU's position as a global leader in data-driven innovation while reducing administrative burdens.

CONNECT will prepare a **Digital Networks Act** which aims to improve market incentives to build advanced networks to benefit consumers and businesses, reducing administrative burden and compliance costs for providers and increasing network resilience in line with the EU's preparedness objectives. CONNECT intends to update the framework on Mobile Satellites Services to account for technology and policy developments.

On 1 January 2026 Ukraine and Moldova will join the **EU Roam Like at Home** area. CONNECT will work on the legal solution to extend the area to the Western Balkans. CONNECT will prepare an interim report on the functioning of the roaming market and the review of the implementing rules on the roaming fair use policy and sustainability mechanism.

CONNECT will put forward a **Cloud and AI Development Act**, accompanied by a single EU-wide cloud policy for public administrations and public procurement. Together, the two initiatives will propose measures to at least triple the capacity of the EU's data centres within the next five to seven years. These initiatives will also ensure that the EU can rely on highly secure EU-based cloud capacity for highly critical use cases, and create a common EU marketplace for cloud and AI services to enable more service providers to enter the market.

Together with the Directorate-General for Competition, CONNECT will continue to supervise the implementation and enforcement of the **Digital Markets Act (DMA)** to ensure fair and open platform economy. This entails using a continuous regulatory dialogue and, where necessary, targeted enforcement actions to ensure that designated gatekeepers comply with their specific obligations under the DMA in order to preserve and facilitate fair and contestable markets in the digital sector, opening up new opportunities for business users and empowering end users to take back control of their 'digital footprint'. The review of the DMA Regulation will be finalised in 2026.

Under the **Digital Services Act (DSA),** work will focus on ensuring that platforms uphold their responsibilities to protect fundamental rights and guarantee a safe and transparent online environment. Priorities include strengthening fundamental rights and the safety and compliance of online marketplaces, as well as defending the DSA decisions before the European Court of Justice. CONNECT will also ensure that the supervisory fee system operates as intended, enabling its enforcement activities to be carried out effectively and sustainably.

For the completion of the legal and technical framework for the **European Digital Identity Wallet**, CONNECT will finalise the preparation, adoption and update of the implementing acts and of the architecture and reference framework of the wallet, as well as the reference implementation provided to Member States. CONNECT will establish the wallet trust framework and the catalogues for electronic attestations of attributes. It monitors the implementation of wallets in the Member States and provides support for the development and certification of the wallet, in cooperation with the EU Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA), and supports the integration of the mobile driving licences into the wallets. CONNECT engages with national authorities, certification authorities, wallet providers and developers, standardisation authorities and industry. It will ensure mainstreaming of the wallet in EU policies and develop and support wallet use cases. The age verification application will be completed.

CONNECT will engage in negotiations on the proposal on the **European Business Wallets**. In parallel, it will prepare draft implementing legislation and prepare the necessary technical framework at EU level for the deployment of the first European Business Wallets.

Engagement with Member States and third countries will include contributing to the creation of an EU Digital Public Infrastructure Service Offer. CONNECT will ensure the legal and technical implementation of the **eIDAS Regulation** and prepare a review of the Regulation. International engagement for the wallet and trust services ecosystem will be extended, working towards mutual recognition of qualified trust services and interoperability with eID wallets.

Creative Europe – Media contributes to unlock the audiovisual industry's potential to become more competitive and to enhance its cultural diversity. Its mid-term evaluation confirmed that the programme is well aligned with the EU's media policy agendas and regulatory frameworks, and that it has been effective in supporting the transnational circulation of European audio visual works, the competitiveness of the industry (for example through cross-border cooperation between audio visual players) and its cultural and geographical diversity. CONNECT will set up a new media resilience programme and continue supporting professional news media. In close cooperation with the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture and the Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers, it works with the co-legislators in the negotiations on the newly proposed AgoraEU programme.

CONNECT will advance on the preparation of a **videogames strategy**, recognising the sector's growing cultural and economic significance, its capacity to drive digital innovation, competitiveness and creative excellence across Europe.

Copyright rules remain essential to protect creators, improve the competitiveness of the EU creative industries and support innovation in the single market. CONNECT will prepare the review of the **Directive on copyright in the Digital Single Market** and of the **Directive on online transmissions and retransmissions of radio and TV programmes**. It will assess the effectiveness of the rules introduced in these instruments and their impact on a wide range of market players across the creative industries. CONNECT supports the deployment of generative AI while ensuring that EU copyright rules are respected. It will back the implementation of the text and data mining exceptions, including facilitating the expression and respect of the reservations of rights made by rightsholders. CONNECT will explore how to further support the licensing and enforcement of copyright in the context of AI.

Based on the assessment of the **Recommendation on combating online piracy of sports and other live events**, CONNECT will explore how to better protect the creative and sports industries against online piracy. It will consider the impacts of copyright rules on research organisations and assess the need for adjustments to support access to and reuse of research findings. CONNECT will participate and contribute to ensure progress in the discussions on copyright in the World Intellectual Property Organisation.

CONNECT will contribute to a more competitive and digitally integrated automotive ecosystem through the implementation of the **Automotive Action Plan**, fostering innovation in connected and automated driving technologies, advancing the European Connected and Autonomous Vehicle Alliance (ECAVA), and promoting the development of a European software-defined

vehicle architecture and European software stacks for applications such as autonomous driving in an open source set-up. These actions will strengthen the EU's technological sovereignty, reduce dependency on non-EU suppliers, and accelerate cross-border testing and deployment of autonomous vehicles.

CONNECT will contribute to accelerating the digital transformation of the EU's energy system through the gradual rollout of a **Gen-AI-enabled digital backbone** that allows fast and efficient data sharing between grid operators, market platforms, and energy assets (e.g. solar panels, wind turbines, charging stations); and the adoption of an energy data exchange framework, in the context of the Common European Energy Data Space. Implementation will build on actions supported under *Digital Europe* and *Horizon Europe*, as well as on the work of the Data4Energy subgroup of the Smart Energy Expert Group.

CONNECT will consolidate Europe's digital talent and innovation ecosystems, contributing to the **Union of Skills**. It will launch three new **Advanced Digital Skills Academies** in AI, virtual worlds and quantum, marking the start of their implementation phase and the development of new training opportunities in emerging technologies. The DG will continue supporting advanced education and training programmes under *Digital Europe*, as well as flagship initiatives such as the **Digital Skills and Jobs Platform** and **EU Code Week**. CONNECT will support the Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs in the implementation of the Multipurpose Legal Gateway Office pilot in India, contributing to the EU's international cooperation on digital talent. Calls for a European League of Advanced Digital Skills Academies (ELEVATE) and European Advanced Digital Skills Competitions will mobilise European stakeholders and support innovative projects that expand Europe's pool of advanced digital expertise. CONNECT will contribute to the 2030 roadmap on the future of digital education and skills and support efforts under the skills portability initiative to enhance the circulation of digital skills across the single market.

General Objective 2
A new era for European Defence and Security

Specific Objective 3: Enhancing cybersecurity and defending Europe's digital infrastructure

Together with other Commission departments, the European External Action Service, ENISA, the Cybersecurity Service for the Union Institutions, Bodies, Offices and Agencies (CERT-EU) and Europol, CONNECT will step up its monitoring and reporting to Commission leadership of the **cybersecurity situation affecting the EU's critical infrastructure sectors**, in the context of wider hybrid threats, the weaponisation of economic dependencies and the need for greater technological sovereignty. This monitoring includes threats of state sponsored attacks with the aim of espionage and disruption, cybercrime, emerging technologies like Generative AI and quantum computing, and negligent cybersecurity practices along supply chains. It will inform effective policy making and the assessment of the effectiveness of existing instruments.

CONNECT will negotiate the revised **Cybersecurity Act** proposal and the cybersecurity-related provisions of the digital omnibus to deliver on effective cybersecurity capabilities for the EU and to create a simplified and more coherent regulatory environment for businesses.

CONNECT will conduct transposition checks and support implementation of the **Network and Information Security 2 (NIS2) Directive**. In line with the revision of the Cybersecurity Act, it will prepare guidelines on the application of supply chain security requirements that entities within the scope of the NIS2 Directive pass on to their suppliers. CONNECT will pursue the implementation of the action plan on the cybersecurity of hospitals and healthcare providers.

In the area of product security, CONNECT will finalise, in consultation with the Cyber Resilience Act Expert Group, a first package of guidance for the implementation of the **Cyber Resilience Act**. CONNECT will support standards development in the European Standardisation Organisations, cooperation with Member States to support their efforts in notifying first conformity assessment bodies and setting up the required market surveillance capabilities.

CONNECT will continue international engagement on cyber-related files, including through cyber dialogues, discussions on potential mutual recognition agreements, the work of the G7 and the Counter-Ransomware Initiative.

CONNECT will continue implementing the **Cyber Solidarity Act**. In cooperation with the European Cybersecurity Competence Center (ECCC), it will support the enhancement of the European Cybersecurity Alert System. CONNECT, in consultation with the NIS Cooperation Group, the European Cyber Crisis Liaison Organisation Network (EU-CyCLONe) and ENISA will continue to identify critically important sectors that can benefit from coordinated testing funded by *Digital Europe*. CONNECT will pursue the implementation of the EU **Cybersecurity Reserve** and maintain its support to ENISA.

In line with the wider Preparedness Union Strategy, CONNECT will coordinate the Commission's part in the implementation of the 2025 **Blueprint on cyber crisis management**, addressing situational awareness, coordination with NATO, development of EU secure communications solutions, preparedness actions (notably the Cyber Europe exercise in June 2026), and crisis response mechanisms. CONNECT will support Member States in the NIS Cooperation Group on coordinated ICT supply chain cybersecurity risk assessments in areas like connected vehicles, medical devices, solar and wind technologies and port security.

CONNECT works on closing the cybersecurity skills gap in the EU through the implementation of the **Cybersecurity Skills Academy** in cooperation with other stakeholders, such as the Industry-Academia Network. CONNECT will work with industry to make commitments (pledges) to bridge the skills and talent gap in the EU.

Digital Europe funds the uptake of key digital technologies for cybersecurity, including generative AI, aiming to enhance the cooperation between the civilian and defense spheres by incentivizing the development of dual-use working product prototypes, ready-to market products and operational infrastructure related to cybersecurity technologies, applications and tools. CONNECT will fund groundbreaking research and innovation in the field of cybersecurity through *Horizon Europe*, with emphasis on advancing security measures across both software

and hardware development, enhancing the security, privacy and robustness of AI models and systems, and promoting cutting-edge approaches to safeguarding AI.

CONNECT will work with Member States within the Submarine Cable Infrastructure Expert Group on Secure and Resilient Submarine Cable Infrastructures and the 2025 **EU Action Plan on Cable Security** including on a follow-up to the 2025 Expert Group reports. CONNECT supports the establishment of regional cable hubs to strengthen the security of submarine cables in cooperation with the ECCC. Subject to endorsement by the Commission, the Cable Security Toolbox and the Cable Projects of European Interest (CPEI) list proposed by the Expert Group will be reflected in the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) Regulation through a delegated act. CEF funding will reinforce the security and resilience of the EU's connectivity submarine and terrestrial backbone, particularly focusing on completing critical routes, supporting SMART cable infrastructures and reinforcing the EU's cable repair capacities.

CONNECT will contribute to better protect critical infrastructures against hybrid **threats posed from overflying drones**. To that end, it will draw its contribution on the potential of new technology and existing telco infrastructure (5G and upcoming 6G) to enhance capacities to detect connected and passive drones, beyond traditional radar.

CONNECT will intensify work on the technological and digital layer of the **defence readiness agenda**, leveraging civilian investment in technologies (AI, Quantum, edge and cyber) and infrastructures (Cables Hub, Cyber Hub, the Telco network, AI Gigafactory) to promote a real defence transformation. The transition to **post-quantum cryptography**, a new kind of cryptography will be crucial to safeguarding sensitive communications and infrastructures against the threat posed by quantum computing to current cryptography. Based on the 2024 Commission Recommendation and following the 2025 coordinated implementation roadmap for the transition to post-quantum cryptography, CONNECT will work with the Member States to provide guidance, monitor progress and foster this transition to protect the digital infrastructures and services of public administrations and other critical infrastructures. *Horizon Europe* will support advanced cryptographic schemes and high-assurance, high-speed cryptographic implementations.

General Objective 3

Protecting our democracy, upholding our values

Specific Objective 4: Countering disinformation while promoting diverse cultural content to protect Europe's values and democracy

Free, independent and pluralistic media are essential to democracies as they underpin the integrity and diversity of the information space. CONNECT will prepare a **Media Resilience Programme**, as foreseen in the Democracy Shield, to bridge the current support with the funding programmes under the multiannual financial framework 2028-2034.

CONNECT will ramp up the support *Creative Europe – Media* to local media through new projects to develop skills, and targeted media collaborations. CONNECT will promote impact investments in the news media sector and start engaging with potential investors alongside the EIB Group. It will explore ways to help develop pan-European platforms to make real-time news

and information from professional media outlets available to wider audiences across the EU in multiple languages. The ***Creative Europe* cross-sectoral strand and multimedia actions funds** will offer support to innovative media projects providing new journalistic formats and content. Multimedia actions will enhance the provision of news content on EU affairs, contributing to a trustworthy information ecosystem.

CONNECT will monitor the implementation of the **Audiovisual Media Services Directive** and conduct the ex-post evaluation of the directive's impact and its added value. CONNECT may then prepare a proposal to update and simplify the legal framework, accompanied by an impact assessment and supported by desk research and stakeholder consultations.

CONNECT will monitor Member States' implementation of the **European Media Freedom Act,** most of whose provisions apply since 8 August 2025 and help Member States to comply with the Act. CONNECT will also deliver some of the guidelines envisaged in the Act. It will coordinate the media freedom and pluralism part of the 2026 annual rule of law report.

CONNECT will continue its efforts through the initiatives identified in the **European Democracy Shield** and **through the Digital Services Act (DSA)**. The Commission enforces the DSA in line with the guidelines for the mitigation of systemic risks online for elections with the aim to promote a safe, predictable and trusted online environment by requiring very large online platforms and search engines to carry out risk assessments and mitigate risks related to civic discourse, electoral processes and public security, while protecting fundamental rights.

CONNECT will monitor the implementation of the **voluntary Code of Conduct on Disinformation**, which is a benchmark for determining compliance with the DSA regarding disinformation risks for the providers of VLOPs and VLOSEs that must comply with the Code. The Commission will regularly monitor and evaluate the achievement of the objectives of the Code and encourage and facilitate its regular review and adaptation and will, if necessary, hold DSA regulatory dialogues with Code signatories. As the chair of the Code's permanent taskforce, CONNECT works with signatories to implement their commitments, focusing on transparency, accountability and cooperation measures in the context of elections, including by the Rapid Response System of the Code. In the context of the Democracy Shield, CONNECT encourages signatories to explore measures to deepen the implementation of the Code in areas such as novel forms of manipulative behaviour or demonetisation.

CONNECT will promote media literacy, critical thinking and increasing societal resilience to disinformation. It will continue its efforts to ensure the online safety of minors and young people, while fostering their empowerment and active participation on the internet. CONNECT will draft an **Action Plan against Cyberbullying**, focusing on minors and also addressing the gender dimension and vulnerable youth. Its implementation will be supported by the expertise of the EU co-funded network of Safer Internet Centres and the Better Internet for Kids portal as a central hub on child online safety.

PART 3. A modern and sustainable public administration: outputs in 2026

The internal control framework supports sound management and decision-making. It ensures that risks to the achievement of objectives are addressed and reduced to acceptable levels through cost-effective controls.

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

A. Human resource management

To ensure a high staff satisfaction level despite the ongoing human resources challenges, CONNECT will launch a participatory process to devise a local action plan to address the concerns revealed by the 2025 staff opinion survey and, upon adoption by the Management Team, will gradually implement and follow-up on said actions.

To adapt to the evolving landscape of collaborative work environments, CONNECT will actively leverage Microsoft 365 to enhance teamwork and communication. This initiative aligns with its commitment to embracing new work methodologies that foster efficiency and flexibility.

The local diversity and inclusion network will discuss topics of concern to staff and take action to ensure a respectful and inclusive workplace for all (e.g., annual diversity and inclusion days, new working methods, ad hoc working groups).

The 'We are CONNECT' staff engagement campaign will continue to strengthen the sense of community within CONNECT, ensuring staff are well informed about the DG's activities and successes. Additionally, CONNECT University sessions will promote digital literacy and awareness of digital transformation, both within the organisation and externally.

The DG will continue to strive towards a gender balance at all management levels (in 2025, 53% of CONNECT middle managers were female). Besides corporate efforts and targets for female first appointments to middle management posts, the DG will nurture an internal 'pipeline' of female management talent, to be complemented with inter-DG mobility.

CONNECT plans to ensure a fair and efficient allocation of resources despite reduced staffing levels due to budget cuts and redeployments. This involves maximising internal redeployment possibilities and achieving efficiency gains to manage the increased policy workload.

Details of outputs planned for 2026 can be found in Annex 2 under Human resource management.

B. Digital transformation and data management

Digital transformation

CONNECT's mission to foster a more autonomous, secure, sovereign and human-centred digital society in Europe is also reflected within the department. CONNECT Digital Transformation Office supports the implementation of digital policies through the management of via data sources and innovative technical solutions. A digital culture programme launched in 2025 reinforces the emphasis on tailored internal training on AI tools, cybersecurity, data and document management, collaboration and digital-ready policymaking.

CONNECT is committed to implementing corporate rules, privileging simplification, automation and reuse-buy-build, as well as rethinking sovereignty and digital autonomy issues, exploring specific use cases. In particular, CONNECT is already above the Commission's average in cloud adoption and is moving progressively to sovereign cloud solutions.

CONNECT aims to increase its tenure on digital culture, process redesign, data literacy and increase cybersecurity posture, also implementing the recommendation of the Cloud Council and applying corporate rules. CONNECT aims to reinforce its digitisation and simplification of processes, namely in the context of digital autonomy in AI office collaboration and sovereign cloud solutions for the Digital Services Act and AI office modules. Additionally, the DG will prioritise improving digital skills and cybersecurity awareness, as well as reinforcing secure communications and collaboration across the department. The goal is to foster a digital-first mindset, promote the use of modern technologies, and ensure the department remains at the forefront of digital innovation. CONNECT will pursue its internal digital culture initiative, which comprises a reinforced digital-ready policymaking approach, with a clear link between its IT Unit and the interinstitutional unit. The early involvement of the IT unit and screening and support of the policy units for their proposals' digital impacts enables a faster delivery of the IT solutions and increased reusability.

Data management

Data management is central to CONNECT's digital transformation, enhancing both efficiency and policy. With a streamlined governance model led by data stewards and collaboration champions, our department is shifting from knowledge to data management to become more data driven. Platforms like the 365 suite, document management tools, and data systems support this shift, alongside ongoing training and coaching.

The Knowledge Portal is becoming a data-governed, compliant workplace as CONNECT advances in data maturity. Regular updates to the Commission's internal Dataset Inventory will be supported by data stewards to improve mapping and accessibility. CONNECT aims to publish more datasets on data.europa.eu and promote open data.

Synergies with other Commission departments are encouraged for data reuse, especially within the Knowledge Management and Information family. The department supports corporate data services like DIGIT's Data Portal and leverages data steward networks. IT interoperability is a

priority, with plans to test data quality tools and apply FAIR (findable, accessible, interoperable, reusable) principles. The current estimated data maturity level is "Established"; pending clarity on the new tool to evaluate data quality the aim is to at least maintain this level.

Staff training on data topics is promoted to enhance documentation and support openness, maturity, and interoperability goals.

Data Protection

CONNECT will implement the Commission's data protection action plan that identifies the main objectives and priorities to ensure compliance with data protection rules. The operational controllers will adopt new records, together with the corresponding privacy statements, as well as Data Protection Impact Assessments where relevant, for new processing activities and will review existing ones. 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 be pursued. CONNECT will continue implementing the data protection action plan for the Artificial Intelligence Office. The DG will ensure that agreements with external processors are duly signed.

C. Sound financial management

CONNECT implements the budget directly and through executive agencies, i.e., the European Health and Digital Executive Agency, the European Research Executive Agency, the European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency and the European Education and Culture Executive Agency.

CONNECT supervises entities to which it delegates policy or budget implementation tasks, i.e., decentralised agencies (ENISA, the BEREC Office), joint undertakings (Chips JU, European High Performance Computing JU, Smart Networks and Services JU), and the European Cybersecurity Competence Centre. CONNECT also entrusts part of the budget to other bodies (European Space Agency, the European Organisation for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites, the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts, the United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs, the European Audiovisual Observatory, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and Europol), to the European Investment Bank, and to the European Investment Fund in respect of financial instruments.

CONNECT is responsible for the implementation of several programmes: Digital Europe, Connecting Europe Facility II – Digital; the framework programme for research, Horizon Europe; Creative Europe – MEDIA; and the corresponding legacy programmes. Controls are put in place to ensure the legality and regularity of transactions and sound financial management, taking into account the multiannual character of programmes and the nature of the payments concerned. The internal control systems are adapted to the DG's portfolio of programmes that it manages directly or has delegated to the entrusted entities.

CONNECT's controls are measured against specific indicators, namely effectiveness, efficiency and economy indicators. To achieve the targets, the DG put in place risk differentiated controls (*ex ante* and *ex post*) embedded in its programme management processes which are regularly revised. The *ex ante* controls are tailored to the different types of costs and follow a shared approach to risk management, involving objective criteria for identifying risks, and tools to

manage and mitigate them. The *ex post* controls for grant management are part of the programme-specific audit strategies. For *Horizon programmes* the *ex post* audits are centralised in the Common Audit Service (CAS) for the whole research and innovation family. For *Digital Europe*, an *ex post* audit strategy is being implemented. It contributes to the assessment of the legality and regularity of transactions by means of *ex post* financial audits carried out by the European Health and Digital Executive Agency (HaDEA). The *ex post* audit campaigns for Horizon Europe and Digital Europe programmes, which were launched in the second half of 2024 will continue in 2026 in line with the respective audit strategies and the *ex post* audit results will allow for corrections (cleaning effect).

All programmes led by CONNECT are integrated into the corporate Commission IT tools (e.g. eGrants, eProcurement, SEDIA). Grants for pilot projects/preparatory actions also use eGrants. The onboarding of multimedia actions is in progress. The IT tools are continuously improved to simplify and harmonise programme management. CONNECT regularly proposes requirements for new features via the different governance groups. Information sessions for national contact points are regularly organised to raise awareness about the specificities of *Digital Europe* and to facilitate the understanding of the reporting requirements by grant beneficiaries.

The estimated overall risk at payment and risk at closure, as reported in the 2024 CONNECT annual activity report, represented 2.50% and 1.68% of CONNECT's relevant expenditure respectively. In 2026, CONNECT will keep on monitoring closely all key performance indicators linked to financial management ensuring that they are reached following the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The DG's internal control system is designed to maintain error rates within an acceptable range.

During 2026, in addition to the already mentioned measures which ensure a sound financial management in the programme management, CONNECT will take further measures to ensure that the level of error for *Digital Europe* is maintained under the materiality threshold (e.g. improved guidance and training sessions to beneficiaries; ensure media resources are developed/adapted to cover *Digital Europe*, etc).

As regards the other control objectives, controls are in place to:
- safeguard CONNECT's assets and ensure that confidential and/or sensitive information is not disclosed, or that its integrity breached (data altered).
- Ensure the reliability of reporting stemming from the supervision of entrusted entities.

D. Fraud risk management

CONNECT's anti-fraud strategy 2025-2027 and its action plan address the risk of fraud related to the DG's current portfolio of activities, including the new enforcement tasks. It is based on the methodology of the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) and is aligned with the Commission's Anti-Fraud Strategy and with the Common Anti-Fraud Strategy in the research and innovation family.

CONNECT will implement awareness-raising campaigns and deliver trainings on anti-fraud topics, especially related to grant management under its programmes. CONNECT will participate in the anti-fraud networks set up by the Research Family and OLAF. CONNECT will work closely with OLAF to notify suspicions of fraud and to implement the recommendations stemming from its investigations. CONNECT's risk register, which is regularly updated, also covers the fraud aspects. The DG is responsible for the

implementation of action 32 (media freedom) of the 2023 Action Plan accompanying the Commission's Anti-Fraud Strategy. Details of outputs planned for 2026 can be found in [Annex 2 under Fraud risk management](#).

E. Sound environmental management

The main sustainability initiatives for CONNECT in 2026 are the following: first, to further reduce travel-related emissions for staff and expert professional travel, (the 2019 baseline for CONNECT's carbon footprint being 816 tCO_2eq.), secondly, to promote eco-friendly habits through communication initiatives ('Bring your mug', waste sorting) and EMAS related activities (e.g. VéloMai, clothes collection drives, recycling weeks). Third, fostering closer collaboration between units will ensure that EMAS actions are regular and visible throughout the year. Lastly, CONNECT plans to launch at least one poster campaign on sustainable events and reducing emissions.

ANNEXES
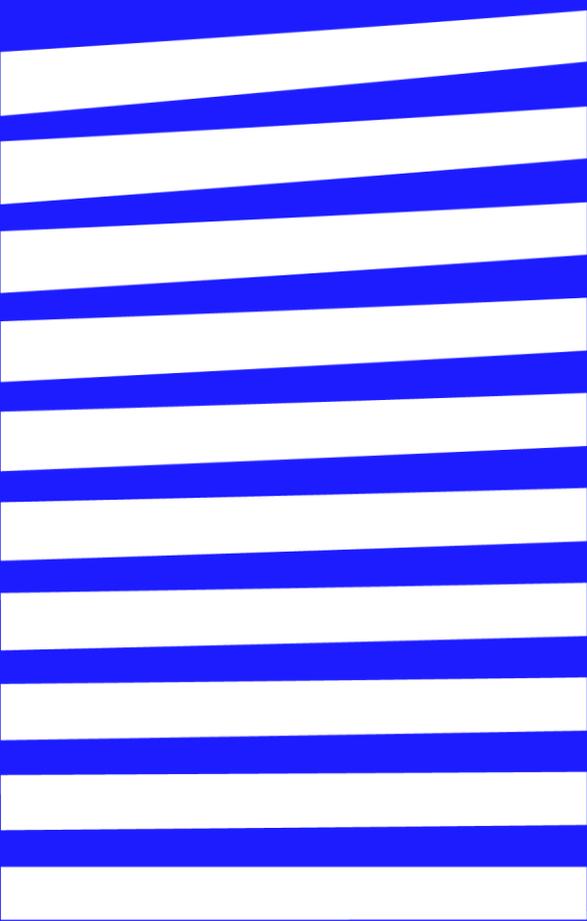
1. ANNEX 1: Performance tables – delivering on Commission priorities in 2026

General objective 1: A new plan for Europe's sustainable prosperity and competitiveness		
Specific Objective 1.1: Strengthening digital and frontier technologies for Europe's strategic autonomy		
Related to spending programme(s): Horizon Europe, Digital Europe, Connecting Europe Facility – Digital		
Main outputs in 2026:		
New policy initiatives		
Output	**Indicator**	**Target**
Chips Act 2.0 proposal	Adoption by the Commission	Q1 2026
Chips JU 2.0 proposal (as part of Single Basic Act successor)	Adoption by the Commission	Q4 2026
Quantum Act – proposal for a Regulation	Adoption by the Commission	Q4 2026
SNS JU successor on Future networks (as part of Single Basic Act successor)	Adoption by the Commission	Q4 2026
Initiatives linked to regulatory simplification and burden reduction		
Output	**Indicator**	**Target**
Evaluations and fitness checks – part of the stress testing of the EU acquis		
Output	**Indicator**	**Target**
Evaluation of the Chips Act	Input gathered via public consultation and call for evidence.	Q1 2026
Implementation dialogues and significant reality checks		
Output	**Indicator**	**Target**
Major public consultations		
Output	**Indicator**	**Target**
Targeted stakeholder consultation + Call for Evidence on the Quantum Act	Consultation completed; synopsis report	Q3 2026
Major implementation activities and enforcement actions		
Output	**Indicator**	**Target**

Other major outputs		
Output	**Indicator**	**Target**
Frontier AI – Call for expression of interest	Publication	Q1 2026
Foundation models for robotics	Project start	Q3 2026
Report on the review of the Digital Decade Policy Programme	Publication	Q2 2026
Fourth Report on the state of the Digital Decade	Publication	Q2 2026
Communication on an EU open source strategy (jointly with DG DIGIT)	Adoption	Q1 2026
Open Internet Stack	Launch project under Horizon Europe (HE)	Q1 2026
EDIC Digital Commons	Start of activities	Q1 2026
AI for Public Good: first AI models of the Digital Twins for reconstruction	Publication	Q4 2026
Adoption of the Connecting Europe Facility – Digital work programme 2027	Adoption by the Commission	Q4 2026

General objective 1: A new plan for Europe's sustainable prosperity and competitiveness

Specific Objective 1.2: A true digital single market to advance Europe's productivity and competitiveness

Related to spending programme(s): Horizon Europe, Digital Europe, Connecting Europe Facility – Digital, and Creative Europe - MEDIA

Main outputs in 2026:

New policy initiatives

Output	Indicator	Target
Cloud and AI Development Act together with a single EU-wide cloud policy for public administrations and public procurement	Adoption by the Commission	Q1 2026

Initiatives linked to regulatory simplification and burden reduction

Output	Indicator	Target
Negotiation of the Commission's proposal for a European Business Wallet	EP and Council negotiations	2026

Evaluations and fitness checks – part of the stress testing of the EU acquis

Output	Indicator	Target
Review of the EU Digital Identity Framework	Review completed	Q2 2026

Implementation dialogues and significant reality checks

Output	Indicator	Target

Major public consultations

Output	Indicator	Target

Major implementation activities and enforcement actions

Output	Indicator	Target
AI Act: kick-off of Advisory Forum and Scientific Panel + high-risk classification guidelines	Launch + publication	Q1 2026
AI Act: Start of enforcement of and finalisation of Code of Practice & guidelines marking and labelling of AI-generated content	Publication	Q3 2026

Other major outputs

Output	Indicator	Target
Apply AI strategy: roadmap for each sector	Publication	Q1 2026

Output	Indicator	Target
75% of Innovation Hubs (EDIHs) as AI Experience centres+AI Skills Academy operational	Launches	Q4 2026
ECAVA Steering Committee meetings to guide implementation and cybersecurity coordination	Number of meetings held	≥ 2 meetings in 2026
Digital Europe Programme Call 2.2.2.9 – Collaboration platform for the European Connected and Autonomous Vehicle of the Future	Platform launched and connected to ECAVA workstreams on cybersecurity, data sharing, and interoperability	Q4 2026
Secretariat of the European Connected and Autonomous Vehicle Alliance (ECAVA)	Grant agreement signed and secretariat established to coordinate ECAVA activities	Q3 2026
Adoption of Creative Europe – media work programme 2026	Adoption by the Commission	Q3 2026

General objective 2:   A new era for European Defence and Security

Specific Objective 2.1: Enhancing cybersecurity and defending Europe's digital infrastructure

Related to spending programme(s): Horizon Europe, Digital Europe, Connecting Europe Facility – Digital

Main outputs in 2026:

New policy initiatives

Output	Indicator	Target
Publication of Commission guidelines on the Cyber Resilience Act	Adoption by the Commission	Q1 2026
Adoption of the revision of the Cybersecurity Act	Adoption by the Commission	Q1 2026
Action plan on countering drone threats	Adoption by the Commission	Q1 2026

Initiatives linked to regulatory simplification and burden reduction

Output	Indicator	Target
Publication of Commission guidelines on the application of NIS2 supply chain security requirements	Adoption by the Commission	Q4 2026

Evaluations and fitness checks – part of the stress testing of the EU acquis

Output	Indicator	Target

Implementation dialogues and significant reality checks

Output	Indicator	Target

Major public consultations

Output	Indicator	Target

Major implementation activities and enforcement actions		
Output	**Indicator**	**Target**
Other major outputs		
Output	**Indicator**	**Target**
Adoption of standards to support the Cyber Resilience Act (CRA) implementation by the European Standardisation Organisations	29 standards	Q4, 2026
Recommendations to further refine the Action Plan for cybersecurity of hospitals and healthcare providers	Adoption by the Commission	Q1 2026
Establishment of the single reporting platform by ENISA	CRA reporting done via the single reporting platform	Q3, 2026
Follow up within Submarine Cable Infrastructure Expert Group of the implementation of mapping, risk assessment, and stress tests, as well as on the Cable Security Toolbox and Cable Projects of European Interest (CPEIs)	2-3 in-person Expert Group meetings	Q4 2026
Putting forward EU-owned secure communications solutions for the cybersecurity community	Submission to the Council	Q3 2026
Member States coordinated roadmap for the transition to post-quantum cryptography (second version/additional guidance)	Publication	Q2 2026

General objective 3:   Protecting our democracy, upholding our values

Specific Objective 3.1: Countering disinformation while promoting diverse cultural content to protect Europe's values and democracy

Related to spending programme(s): Horizon Europe, Creative Europe - MEDIA
Main outputs in 2026:

New policy initiatives		
Output	**Indicator**	**Target**
Action plan against cyberbullying	Adoption by the Commission	Q1 2026
Initiatives linked to regulatory simplification and burden reduction		
Output	**Indicator**	**Target**
Update of the rules on audiovisual media services	Adoption by the Commission	Q3 2026
Evaluations and fitness checks – part of the stress testing of the EU acquis		
Output	**Indicator**	**Target**
Review of the Directive on Copyright in the Digital Single Market	Adoption of report by the Commission	Q4 2026

Implementation dialogues and significant reality checks		
Output	**Indicator**	**Target**
Major public consultations	26	
Output	**Indicator**	**Target**
Open public consultation on the update of the rules on audiovisual media services	Consultation completed; synopsis report	Q2 2026
Public consultation on the revision of EU copyright rules	Consultation completed; synopsis report	Q4 2026
Major implementation activities and enforcement actions		
Output	**Indicator**	**Target**
Assessment of Member States' implementation of European Media Freedom Act	First individual assessments completed for all Member States	Q4 2026
Other major outputs		
Output	**Indicator**	**Target**

ANNEX 2: Performance tables – A modern and sustainable public administration

A. Human resource management

Human resource management Objective: CONNECT employs a skilled, diverse and motivated workforce to deliver on the Commission's priorities.		
Main outputs in 2026:		
Output	**Indicator**	**Target**
Gender balance in CONNECT		
Participation of women in corporate talent development programme	Maximum female participation to corporate management development programme	At least 50% of women under the DG CONNECT quota
Close monitoring of gender statistics in pre-management positions by CONNECT's HR Committee	Number of women in middle-management positions (baseline: situation on 01/01/23 (51%))	>50%
Staff Engagement Index		
Follow-up action plan in response to the 2025 corporate staff survey	Adoption of Staff Survey Follow-Up action plan	Yes
	Implementation of Staff Survey Follow-Up action plan	Yes
'We are CONNECT' staff :engagement campaign	Number of We Are CONNECT newsletters	8
CONNECT University sessions	Number of CONNECT University sessions	15 CONNECT University sessions and 1 CONNECT University School
Skills gap		
Targeted calls for expression of interest will be launched in order to attract the necessary profiles to deliver on the implementation of the Digital Services Act and the Artificial Intelligence Act	Number of additional recruitments of external staff to work on the implementation of the Digital Services Act and the Artificial Intelligence Act	Increase of 80 external staff (60 for DSA and 20 for AI) over 2026

B. Digital transformation and data management

Objective:	CONNECT is using innovative, trusted digital solutions for better policymaking, data management and administrative processes to create a digitally transformed, user-focused and data-driven Commission.		

Main outputs in 2026:

Digital Transformation

Output	Indicator	Target
Digital Culture Staff following at least one IT training course, including cybersecurity Performance of staff on phishing exercise	% of staff that completed at least one IT training course Percentage of click rate	40% (baseline: 37% in 2025) Click rate < 22 %
Digital-ready policymaking Trainings / information sessions on digital-ready policymaking offered to policy officers Local digital-ready policymaking support team	Number of information/training sessions organised on digital-ready policymaking Establishment of a local digital-ready policymaking support team	At least two per year Yes
Business-driven Digital Transformation AI technical capabilities implemented across systems	Number of AI technical capabilities implemented across systems	5 systems (baseline: 3)
Seamless Digital Environment Projects using reusable solutions IT system using cloud against datacentre	Percentage of project using reusable solutions Percentage of IT systems using cloud against datacentre	50 % (baseline 48%) 60 % (baseline 58%)
Green, Resilient and Secure Digital Infrastructure IT System with an updated security plan	Percentage of systems with updated security plan	95%
Tracking the adherence of CONNECT to the objective for 100% attestation of compliance for the 55 IT priority controls for all communication and information systems	Percentage of systems with Governance Risk and Compliance (GRC) attestation	95%

Data Management

Output	Indicator	Target
Sessions on data, document and information management organised by CONNECT	Number of training and network sessions organised on Data, information and document management	10

Data Protection

Output	Indicator	Target

Creation of records for newly identified data processing activities	Percentage of new records created for newly identified data processing activities	100%
Training sessions organised by the Data Protection Coordinator team	Number of training sessions % of staff trained on the requirements of Regulation (EU) 2018/1725	2 sessions 90%
Signature of agreements with external processors	Percentage of agreements signed	100%
Handle requests from data subjects to exercise their rights in respect of the established procedures	Percentage of data subject's requests handled	100%

C. Sound financial management

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 2026

Output	Indicator	Target
Effective controls: legal and regular transactions	Estimated risk at payment and at closure for Horizon 2020 grants	Remains as close as possible to 2 % of relevant expenditure
	Estimated risk at payment and at closure for Horizon Europe grants	Remains below 2% of relevant expenditure
	Estimated risk at payment and at closure for *Digital Europe* grants	Remains below 2% of relevant expenditure
	Estimated overall risk at payment and at closure	Remains below 2 % of relevant expenditure
Effective controls: Safeguarding of information	Data breaches handled in accordance with the EUDPR and internal policies	100% of data breaches handled
Efficient controls	Budget execution and / or timely payments	Remains > 95% of payment appropriations and remains > 95% of payments (in value) made on time
Economy of controls	Overall estimated cost of controls	Remains < 4% of funds managed

D. Fraud risk management

Objective: The risk of fraud is minimised through the application of effective anti-fraud measures and the implementation of the Commission anti-fraud strategy (¹) aimed at the prevention, detection and correction (²) of fraud.		
Main outputs in 2026:		
Output	**Indicator**	**Target**
Implementation of the CONNECT anti-fraud strategy (Research family anti-fraud strategy and CONNECT's)	% of implementation actions planned in the anti-fraud strategy	100%
Organise fraud risk awareness raising trainings and similar anti-fraud trainings with a focus on cases/ examples and exchange of best practices.	Number of fraud risk awareness training sessions organised in CONNECT. Percentage of newcomers (staff involved in grant management joining the DG and newcomers joining the Resources Directorate in the past year) who attend the fraud risk awareness training sessions during the year.	One session 55%
Active participation in anti-fraud networks	Participation in the 'Fraud Prevention and Detection Network' and 'Fraud And Irregularities in Research' Committee meetings	Participation in all FPDNet and FAIR Committee meetings

E. Sound environmental management

Objective: Reaching climate neutrality by 2030 and a reduced environmental footprint for the Commission.		
Main outputs in 2026		
Output	**Indicator**	**Target**
Actions to reduce emissions from staff missions (³)	1 internal communication campaign organised	Q4 2026
Emissions from experts' travel under the administrative budget	1 action organised to reduce experts' travel	Q4 2026

(¹)   Communication from the Commission 'Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy: enhanced action to protect the EU budget", COM(2019) 176 of 29 April 2019; Communication from the Commission "Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy Action plan – revision 2023" COM(2023) 405 of 11 July 2023 – "the Communication on the 2023 revision" – and the accompanying revised action plan, SWD(2023)245– "the revised Action Plan".

(²)   'Correction of fraud' is an umbrella term, which notably refers to the recovery of amounts unduly spent and to administrative sanctions.

(³)   DG/department emissions report from MiPS+. Emissions from staff whose place of assignment is one of the Commission's sites.

Output	Indicator	Target
Energy saving actions	BEST action to reduce building emissions organised during the winter break	Yes
	CONNECT offices shared with DG Competition during summer months in the context of BEST	Yes
Staff awareness-raising actions	1 awareness-raising session organised for CONNECT staff	Q4 2026
Promoting EMAS initiatives and eco-friendly habits	Strengthen communication and participation in EMAS activities (e.g., VéloMai, clothes collection drives, recycling weeks) encourage everyday eco-actions: "Bring your mug", waste sorting	Q4 2026