



European
Commission

Management plan 2022

Directorate-General for Communications
Networks, Content and Technology

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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.

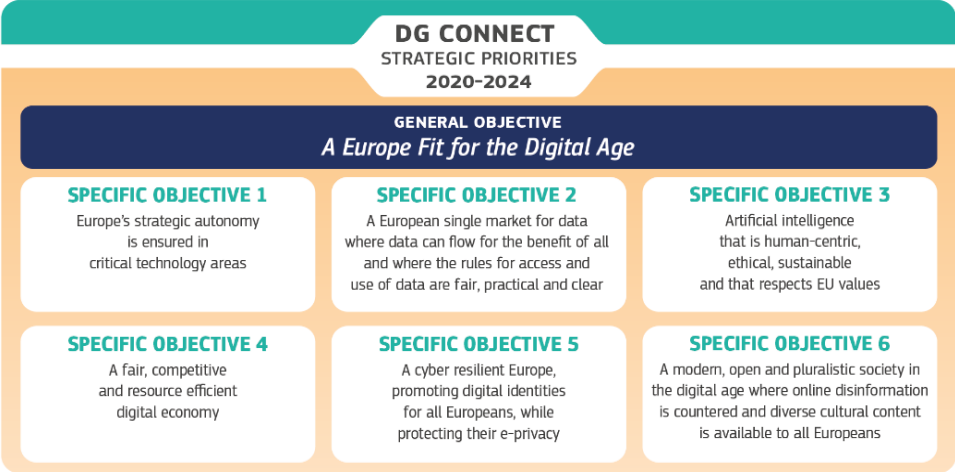
We pursue our general objective of achieving ‘A Europe Fit for the Digital Age’ using the digital compass 2030. This is done through legislation, policy initiatives, eco-system building and by investing in the research, innovation, deployment and uptake of trustworthy green digital technologies.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought about unprecedented challenges for Europe and the world, so CONNECT took an active role in the Commission’s response to the health crisis and its social-economic consequences. One example is the EU digital COVID certificate, which was set up in record time in a joint effort of several Directorates-Generals, and allowed millions of Europeans to move freely and safely. Another important action led by CONNECT was the donation of hundreds of robots to hospitals across Europe. These robots are able to disinfect a standard patient room in under 15 minutes.



CONNECT will continue the efforts to help overcome the crisis by continuing investing in the EU digital COVID certificate infrastructure, digital literacy, and in the fight against disinformation related to vaccines. We will continue to support the implementation of the *Recovery and Resilience Facility* of NextGenerationEU and, hence, make sure that digital contributes to the short-term recovery and long-term prosperity. The pandemic served as a catalyst for accelerating the digitalisation of Europe and the world. It highlighted the need for Europe to be strong, united and greener, as well as the need to reduce our dependencies in the digital sphere.

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 plans to deliver a series of important outputs which are set out in the 2022 Management Plan.

We will present the **European chips act**, aiming to create a state-of-the-art European chip ecosystem that ensures security of supply and will develop new markets for ground-breaking European technology.

Foreseen to be adopted in early 2022, the **data act** has the objective of creating and promoting a fair data economy in Europe, where data value is allocated in a fair way and data usage rights are clear and remain under the control of the individuals and businesses who created them.

With the **new European cyber resilience act**, we will establish common standards for cybersecurity products and, with this, strive to better address cyber-threats and become a leader in cybersecurity.

The preservation of media freedom and pluralism is at the foundation of our democratic systems. We will take further steps to improve the transparency, accountability and independence around actions that affect media freedom and pluralism by tabling a **European media freedom act**.

To define the European way towards the digital transition, the EU institutions will work on a solemn **declaration on digital rights and principles**, as announced in the digital compass communication of March 2021.

The year 2022 will also be the first with the full **implementation of Digital Europe, Horizon Europe** and the **Connecting Europe Facility – digital (CEF-digital)** the new programmes managed by CONNECT to support the digital transformation of Europe.

Finally, the DG will continue its efforts to negotiate some key initiatives pending approval by the European Parliament and the Council. These include the **artificial intelligence act**, the **digital market** and **digital services acts**, the Directive on measures for a high common level of cybersecurity across the Union, the **e-privacy Regulation**, and the framework establishing a **European digital identity**.

The main challenges for 2022 will be the implementation of this agenda together with the further implementation of the *Recovery and Resilience Facility* of NextGenerationEU and the launch of the new programmes – especially *Digital Europe* and *CEF-digital*, for which CONNECT is in the lead.

In terms of communication, our DG will focus on promoting the digital decade and the digital compass, including the following priorities: microchips, platforms' regulation, cybersecurity, cloud, media freedom, safer internet, and web accessibility. A large part of our communication activities will be dedicated to initiatives that should be completed in 2022. We will also promote our new funding programs: *Digital Europe* and *CEF-digital*.

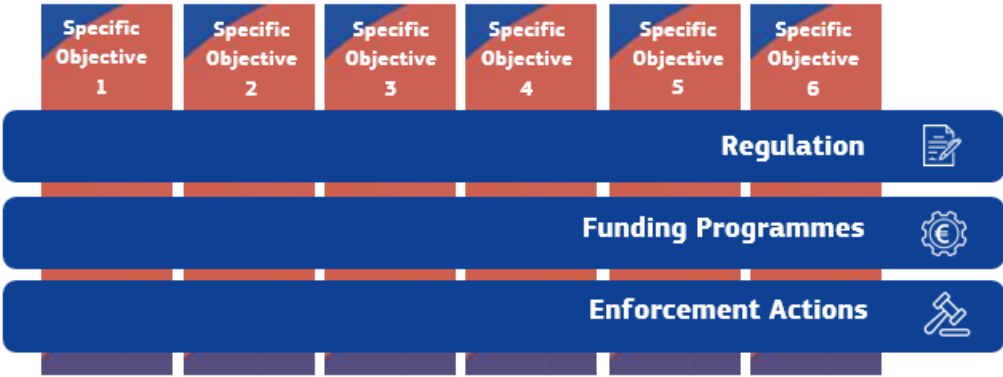
PART 1. Delivering on the Commission’s priorities: main outputs for 2022

General Objective: A Europe fit for the Digital Age

To help make ‘A Europe fit for the Digital Age’, CONNECT will continue to follow the path set in the digital compass communication ⁽¹⁾ for Europe’s digital transformation by 2030. This digital compass for the EU’s digital decade evolves around four cardinal points: skills, secure and sustainable digital infrastructures, the digital transformation of businesses and the digitalisation of public services.

CONNECT will support the legislative process towards the adoption of the **path to the digital decade** and **declaration on digital rights and principles**, which aim to provide the European way towards the digital transition and to organise progress towards targets for 2030 that can deliver a more resilient, empowering, sustainable and inclusive digital economy and society.

To reach the ambitious targets and support the implementation of its policies, CONNECT will use a toolbox composed of regulations and complementary funding programmes covering different aspects of the digital transformation. We will also pay special attention to interacting with various stakeholders.



When regulating new policy initiatives, the DG is fully committed to the application of the better regulation principles to ensure that the policy is prepared, implemented and reviewed in an open, transparent and evidence-based manner. We also aim to listen and to take into account the views of stakeholders and to reduce the burden put on them. For this reason, a number of public consultations, evaluations and fitness checks are planned for 2022.

⁽¹⁾ [COM\(2021\) 118 final](#)

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

- **Digital Europe programme** (total budget of EUR 1.21 billion for 2022) – 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. Three sets of calls for proposals will be concluded in 2022, providing key support to the digital transformation of the economy in the next decade, as well as to strengthen the EU’s digital sovereignty by deploying key technological capabilities.
- **Connecting Europe facility - digital programme (CEF-digital)** (total budget of EUR 282.88 million for 2022) – with the objective of supporting investment in 5G, strategic fibre, and satellite backbone infrastructures, contributing to the Gigabit and 5G targets for 2030 as proposed in the Digital Compass Communication and the strategic autonomy of the Union.
- **Horizon Europe research framework programme** (total budget of EUR 944.84 million⁽²⁾ for 2022) – 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, next-generation internet.
- **Creative Europe - MEDIA and cross-sectoral strands** (total budget of EUR 248.74 million for 2022) – 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. Based on the 22 national recovery and resilience plans (RRP), approved up to October 2021, EUR 117 billion have been earmarked for digital expenditure, representing 26% of total RRF investment in these Member States. This is six percentage points more than the 20% target. CONNECT is involved in the assessment of the plans, in particular for what concerns measures addressing the digital transition, taking into account the digital decade goals.

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 also support media campaigns that illustrate the Commission’s vision, priorities and deliverables, publicise its digital principles

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

and aim to demonstrate how various EU initiatives fit together towards a positive result for companies, citizens and consumers.

Specific objective 1 Europe's strategic autonomy is ensured in critical technology areas	Related to spending programmes: Horizon 2020, Horizon Europe, Digital Europe, Connecting Europe Facility - digital
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The digital decade communication sets the target that, by 2030, the production of sustainable and cutting-edge semiconductors in Europe should reach at least 20% of global production by value, targeting Europe's green and digital transition. To achieve this, and to secure the supply of critical semiconductors for Europe, a set of instruments, initiatives and funding mechanisms have been established.

CONNECT works on a Commission proposal for a **European chips act**  ⁽³⁾, which will mobilise and coordinate European, public and private resources 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** (KDT JU), as well as a second **important project of common European interest** (IPCEI) **on microelectronics**, will foster research and development and innovation and the first deployment amongst industries on processors and semiconductor technologies across the participating Member States.

The **industrial alliance on processors and semiconductor technologies** involves the key EU actors in the microelectronics value chain, research and technology organisations, user companies, as well as Member States and regions. It has the objective of identifying the existing gaps and the technology developments necessary to strengthen EU competitiveness. Its first general assembly will take place in the first half of 2022.



The alliance on semiconductors will rebalance global semiconductor supply chains by ensuring that we have the capacity to design and produce, in Europe, the most advanced chips towards 2nm and below.

Commissioner Thierry Breton

In July 2021, the Council adopted the new European High-Performance Computing Joint Undertaking (EuroHPC JU) Regulation, allowing further investment of EUR 7 billion to provide the newest super and quantum computers, and to support the EU's ambitious research and innovation agenda. In 2022, preliminary steps will be undertaken towards the deployment of next-generation **supercomputers reaching exascale performance** ⁽⁴⁾, as

⁽³⁾ The Berlaymont symbol indicates initiative mentioned in the Commission Work Programme 2022.

⁽⁴⁾ More than one trillion operations per second.

well as further mid-range and precursor to exascale supercomputers. A critical high-speed secure terabit backbone connectivity will be deployed for interconnecting the federated supercomputing and data infrastructures.

As regards the **quantum technologies flagship**, under *Horizon Europe*, the flagship will contribute to the development of world-leading quantum computers and simulators, to be acquired by the EuroHPC JU. These machines will be crucial for enabling the EU to meet its digital decade goal of having its first computer with quantum acceleration by 2025. In 2022 the flagship will enter into its second phase starting the development of the second generation of quantum computers.

Announced in the 2020 'EU cybersecurity strategy for the digital decade' ⁽⁵⁾, 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 2022, actions to prepare for the EuroQCI's deployment will be supported under *Digital Europe*, notably the deployment of national experimental quantum key distribution networks. Moreover, calls supporting cross-border links between national quantum communication networks will be launched under the *Connecting Europe Facility*. In 2022, CONNECT and DG Defence Industry and Space (DEFIS) will work closely together to integrate the EuroQCI into the global space-based secure connectivity system for high-speed internet and secure governmental services under development by DEFIS.

The **destination Earth project** (DestinE) 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 kick-off of DestinE activities is expected in the beginning of 2022. A number of actions concerning the three main components (core platform, data lake and digital twins) will deliver a first baseline of coherent interfaces and services, and lay the foundation of the underlying infrastructure.

CONNECT will work on the **Smart Networks and Services Joint Undertaking** (SNS JU), created in November 2021, with the mission of expanding European leadership in connectivity and related technologies for systems beyond 5G (B5G) and 6G. Actions will focus on progressing towards the establishment of the JU as an autonomous entity and launching at least 30 projects covering the main 6G technological domains. This will include a large-scale, EU-wide testing infrastructure and one flagship project developing the EU's vision for 6G in a global context.

Photonic solutions provide the sensory input for digital systems and equip them with the capabilities to understand the system's environment, which is an indispensable precondition for meaningful data processing. The photonics public-private partnership will play a

⁽⁵⁾ [JOIN\(2020\) 18 final](#)

strategic role in building and bridging communities across Europe, with support from *Horizon Europe*. In 2022, its actions will focus on sensor systems.

The **startup Europe initiative** is part of the 2020 Commission small and medium enterprises strategy for a sustainable and digital Europe ⁽⁶⁾ and connects deep tech startup hubs across the EU. A new wave of projects supporting this policy initiative will be launched under *Horizon Europe*, in cooperation with the European Innovation Council and the European innovation ecosystem programme. The **EU startup nation standard** (EU SNS), a new policy initiative, is focused on improving framework conditions for EU start-ups. CONNECT will work closely with the European Startup Nations Alliance (ESNA) – a hub to actively support the 27 EU SNS countries in sharing and implementing best practices.

The **innovation radar (IR)** is a common tool being used across Commission’s services to identify high potential innovations and innovators in *Horizon Europe* and *Digital Europe* programmes. In the coming year we will continue working on its development and use in Europe.



Our objective for **blockchain** is to bring Europe at the forefront of blockchain innovation and uptake. As one of the key actions, the Commission, all Member States, Norway and Liechtenstein are cooperating in the European blockchain partnership (EBP), which is building a European blockchain services infrastructure (EBSI). The partnership aims to deliver EU-wide, cross-border public services using blockchain technology with the highest standards of security and privacy. In 2022, actions will further develop and deploy the EBSI, reinforce support towards standardisation. A regulatory sandbox initiative will also be launched, serving EBSI as well as other blockchain projects and startups.

CONNECT will continue to focus its communication efforts in line with the Commission’s priorities, as announced in the most recent state of the Union speech. Under this first specific objective, the main focus will be communication about the chips act, focussing on stakeholders and the media, with which the topic is already very popular. Other topics for communication under this objective are: destination Earth (together with DEFIS), and high-performance computing (together with the EuroHPC JU). We will communicate through the digital strategy website, DigitalEU channels on social media, as well as through the spokesperson service, the Commission’s representations and the multipliers through the external projects involving influencers especially in France, Italy and Poland.

The relevant performance table can be found in the [Annex](#) (page 33).

<p style="text-align: center;">Specific objective 2</p> <p style="text-align: center;">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</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Related to spending programmes:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Horizon Europe, Digital Europe, Connecting Europe Facility – digital</p>
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⁽⁶⁾ [COM\(2020\) 103 final](#)

The objective of the EU data strategy ⁽⁷⁾ 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.



Further to the adoption of the 2021 **data governance act**, CONNECT will prepare the implementing legislation – notably on logos for data intermediation services, data altruism organisations and the European data altruism consent form. Furthermore, it will prepare the setting up of the **European data innovation board** as a formal expert group.

The **data act** 📄 – which is foreseen to be adopted as a Commission proposal in early 2022 – will aim to create and promote a fair data economy in Europe, where the value of data is allocated fairly and data usage rights are clear to individuals and businesses, which should remain in control of the data they produce.

CONNECT will continue the progressive deployment of the **common European data spaces**, as planned in the Commission communication on a European strategy for data. This will be done in coordination with the Directorates-General responsible for the corresponding domains.

Based on the mandate of the open data Directive, which aims to improve the availability and reusability of public sector data, a **high value datasets implementing act** will be adopted in 2022. This will define a selection of datasets of particular socio-economic importance, freely and openly available across the EU, contributing to the development of artificial intelligence and overcoming societal challenges.

In 2022, the co-legislators are expected to agree on the **digital markets act** 📄, proposed in December 2020, as one part for the **digital services act package**. The digital markets act contains specific rules for fair and practical access and use of data held by gatekeeper platforms. The **digital services act** 📄 is equally expected to be agreed in 2022 by the co-legislators and similarly contains wide-ranging data access provisions for very large online platforms, notably when it comes to the assessment of systemic risks, the removal of illegal content, or the functioning of platforms' algorithms. Other aspects, beyond rules for the fair and practical access and use of data, are addressed under other specific objectives.

(7) [COM\(2020\) 66 final](#)



In 2022, CONNECT will continue to develop the **EU digital COVID certificate (DCC)** infrastructure and functionalities in accordance with requirements of the evolving epidemiological situation and the policy needs. Work will also continue to open the DCC system to non-EU countries (in early December 2021, more than 25 third countries had successfully aligned their systems). As regards the digital contact tracing apps, the operational management of the related infrastructure - the **European federated gateway service** - will be transferred to the European Centre of Disease Prevention and Control.



CONNECT will continue to facilitate significant investment in next-generation cloud and edge technologies, both under its own financing instruments, and by ensuring coordination with the large-scale investments that Member States are launching under the NextGenerationEU fund, including the possible **important project of common European interest (IPCEI) in the area of next generation cloud and edge computing**.

Launched in July 2021, the **European alliance for industrial data, edge and cloud** will be a key instrument to implement the European data strategy and reach the targets of the 2030 digital compass. The alliance consists of key European industrial players in the area of cloud, business users of cloud services, Member States' representatives and civil society stakeholders. Following the kick-off of the alliance's work in December 2021, in 2022 the alliance will focus on the deliverables to be produced and set a clear timeline for the work needed to produce them.

CONNECT will publish an EU cloud rulebook offering a coherent framework around the different applicable rules (including self-regulation) for cloud services.

The Commission will **evaluate the 2018 free flow of non-personal data Regulation**.

CONNECT in cooperation with relevant DGs will continue to engage with third countries to promote the European data policy.


CONNECT's communication will focus on data, cloud and platforms, the data act and all the different data spaces, as well as the digital services act and digital markets act. For the latter we have planned to reinforce our communication through dedicated audiovisual content and specific messages already tested in nine selected Member States. We will also communicate on the different calls of the various programmes. We will communicate through the digital strategy website, DigitalEU channels on social media, as well as through the spokesperson service, and the Commission's representations and the influencers in some specific countries.

The relevant performance table can be found in the [Annex](#) (page 36).

Specific objective 3

Artificial intelligence that is human-centric, ethical, sustainable and that respects EU values

Related to spending programmes:
Digital Europe, Horizon Europe

CONNECT will contribute to the deliberations in the European Parliament and Council for a swift adoption of the **Commission proposal for a regulatory framework for artificial intelligence** (AI act) . In order to prepare for the effective implementation of the artificial intelligence act, CONNECT will engage in a dialogue with standardisation organisations and reflect upon the preparation of effective and skilled governance structures. To further promote dialogue with Member States, CONNECT will for the first time convene the new expert group of Member States on artificial intelligence and digitisation of business. In support of AI development and deployment, CONNECT will implement the actions set out in the coordinated plan on artificial intelligence.



Five sectorial testing and experimental facilities (TEFs - healthcare, agri-food, manufacturing, smart cities and communities, and edge AI) will be launched, with a budget of EUR 376 million, co-funded with the Member States through *Digital Europe*. These facilities will help capitalise on previous research and development investments and accelerate the transfer of technology to market through testing. This is an essential validation step that will be particularly useful for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which might lack access to such environments.

Another important development in the field of AI is the **public-private partnership (PPP) on AI, data and robotics** that was launched in November 2021. It brings together developers and users and will provide key research labs for this community, including SMEs and start-ups.

CONNECT will continue to reach out to partners around the world to promote the European policy on AI. Specific task forces have been established with Japan and India. Close cooperation is developed with the USA through the Trade and Technology Council and with Canada.



Our communication efforts will focus mainly on artificial intelligence and its benefits for people and society, especially in view of finalising the world first framework on AI. Our communication activities will target both stakeholders and the broader public, with particular attention paid to younger audiences. We will communicate through the digital strategy website, DigitalEU channels on social media, as well as through the spokesperson service and the Commission's representations.

The relevant performance table can be found in the [Annex](#) (page 37).

Specific objective 4
A fair, competitive and resource efficient digital economy

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

The communication on Europe's digital decade set out the 'European way' for its digital transformation. It provides a roadmap to accelerate and shape the EU's digital transformation and its socio-economic benefits, under a common plan with clearly defined goals for 2030. The communication also established the new strategy for 5G and 6G, which provides for a long-term infrastructure investment and deployment agenda, enabling us to fully prepare for the future migration towards 6G.

One file especially relevant for ensuring the proper functioning of the digital internal market is the **digital services act package**, which is expected to be adopted by the co-legislator in 2022 and will lay down landmark rules for platforms and related services. The package consists of the **digital services act**  and the **digital markets act** . These two major initiatives have two main goals. The first is to create a safer digital space in which the fundamental rights of all users of digital services are protected. The second goal is to establish a level playing field, fostering innovation, growth, and competitiveness within the EU and globally. Next to the expected agreement on these rules, the CONNECT will begin preparations for their implementation. The Commission will also intensify its international engagement on these two major acts.

Next to these important milestones, the DG will also analyse the implementation of the **platform-to-business Regulation**, and assess progress on the **geoblocking Regulation** – two recent key regulations in the field of e-commerce.

Specifically in the area of 5G, in line with the objectives set in the digital decade communication and the 5G action plan ⁽⁸⁾, accelerating the deployment of 5G networks will remain a priority. This will include policy actions to facilitate the deployment of secure 5G networks by the private sector and to address market failures through EU financial support for the infrastructure projects. Special emphasis will be put on the **deployment of uninterrupted coverage along 5G corridors for connected and automated mobility**, a flagship area where Europe should build a competitive advantage. In that context, and with the aim of progressing towards the digital decade objectives of 'all main transport paths 5G enabled by 2025' and 100%



⁽⁸⁾ [COM\(2016\) 588 final](#)

coverage by 2030, the 2022 actions will focus on the launch of an early wave of projects for the deployment of around 1000 km, covering at least three cross-border sections of roads and railways across the Union.

Still with the objective of increasing the pace at which 5G is adopted, and based on the **connectivity toolbox** of April 2021, we will continue the coordination with Member States in the context of the connectivity special group to monitor the implementation of the toolbox. Member States are expected to deliver their implementation reports by April 2022.

CONNECT **will intensify its actions towards leveraging public and private investment in very high-capacity networks**, with the objective to cover pan-European backbone infrastructures that connect digital capacities, such as cloud federation, high performance computing, as well as submarine and satellite backbone infrastructure, 5G cross-border corridors and 5G early take-up in local smart communities.

CONNECT will continue to follow the deployment of local wireless connectivity funded under the **wifi4EU scheme**, including with launching the foreseen secured wi-fi authentication services, subject to the successful completion of the trial in the first half of the year. The re-use of wifi4EU results (at least 7000 municipalities connected by end of 2022) will be pursued to support the new digital compass targets.

In line with the digital compass, CONNECT is developing **digital partnerships** around the world, in close cooperation with relevant DGs. In 2022, the EU aims to sign digital partnerships with Japan, Korea and Singapore. Digital partnerships are also established at a regional level with EU Neighbourhood countries, Africa and Latin America.



In this context, the Commission will create a specific **digital global gateway window for digital connectivity** to reinforce convergence of the EU digital economies and to deploy digital networks and infrastructures with key partners.

The new **roaming Regulation** will enter into force on 1 July 2022 and ensure the continuation of the 'roam-like-at-home' benefits for consumers. It will also introduce important changes such as increased sustainability for operators thanks to reduced wholesale caps; the improved access to all network technologies; ensuring better quality of service and increased transparency in terms of access to emergency services; value added services and non-terrestrial networks on ships and airplanes.

Together with the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC) and national regulatory authorities, CONNECT will define the relevant **roaming guidelines at wholesale and retail level**, to ensure a consistent implementation of the **roaming Regulation** in all Member States.

CONNECT will complete the **review of the broadband cost reduction Directive** and start negotiations with the co-legislators in the second half of the year. The revised Directive aims to foster a more efficient and faster deployment of very high-capacity

networks (VHCN - including fibre and 5G), thereby encouraging investments in the EU and contributing to the achievement of the digital decade 2030 Gigabit connectivity target.


In the area of **internet governance**, together with the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the service for foreign policy instruments (FPI), we will support the work of the new United Nations Technology Envoy (responsible for the implementation of the United Nations Secretary-General's roadmap for digital cooperation), as well as the work of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) Leadership Panel, a new multi stakeholder body supporting the IGF reform. CONNECT will also continue its engagement on improving domain name system (DNS) policies and their implementation in the context of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), including the fight against DNS abuse, access to WHOIS registration data and preparing the next round of new generic top-level domains.

As part of the implementation of the 2020 security union strategy and cybersecurity strategy, CONNECT will continue delivering on a set of priorities in the area of internet security, resilience and openness.

As regards the implementation of Regulation (EU) 2019/517 on the implementation and functioning of the **.eu top-level domain name**, CONNECT will work with the designated registry to prepare the ground for the entry into force of the new service concession contract in October 2022.

One of the priorities will be monitoring the implementation of measures for the digitalisation of businesses launched under the national recovery and resilience plans. Another point of attention will be the selection of approximately **200 European digital innovation hubs** (EDIHs) from the candidates designated by the Member States – covering the entire EU, Norway, Iceland, and Lichtenstein. This will help with digital capacity-building in order to support small and medium enterprises and the public sector in their digital transformations.



CONNECT continues to pursue the objectives set out in the digital decade communication to provide Europeans with the necessary **digital skills**. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of digital literacy in today's  world and further demonstrated the lack of digital experts in Europe. *Digital Europe* will be a key instrument to reach the target of least 80% of the population having basic digital skills and 20 million

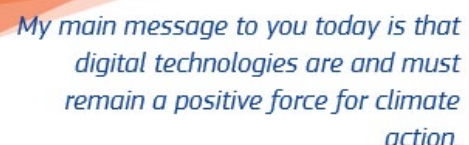
employed ICT specialists in the EU, with convergence between women and men by 2030.

EU CodeWeek will continue to bring computing and computational thinking to schools and train teachers to better equip them with the necessary skills, which will help increase the digital talent pool in the long run. Close collaboration with Member States via the

structured dialogue for digital skills will allow sharing best practices and bring attention to the essential challenge of digital skills and education.

The **circular electronics initiative** (CEI) is one of the flagship policies set forth by the circular economy action plan and the EU digital strategy. Its objectives are to extend the lifetime of electronic devices, avoid premature obsolescence, reduce waste, and increase ICT products' sustainability. A study funded by CONNECT and DG Justice and Consumers on the 'Right to Repair' for electronics will be delivered in 2022. To meet the CEI objectives, a two-pronged approach is currently being envisaged. Supply-side requirements need to be put in place to ensure these devices are repairable and durable by design. On the demand-side, consumers should have easy/affordable access to repairs. Several concrete actions are planned to increase the sustainability of consumer electronics.

Following up on the communication on Europe's digital future mandate to assess transparency measures on the environmental footprint of electronic communications networks and services, CONNECT conducted a **study on the greening of electronic communications services and networks**, as part of the study on data centres. Building on its findings, further data on the environmental footprint of electronic communications networks and services will be necessary and, in 2022, CONNECT will continue to engage with stakeholders and with other services on the sustainability of electronic communications networks and services.



My main message to you today is that digital technologies are and must remain a positive force for climate action.

Commissioner Thierry Breton

Highly resource-efficient data centres will be the backbone of the next generation of secure and sustainable European cloud capacities. In 2022, CONNECT will continue work to **make data centres climate-neutral, highly energy efficient and sustainable by 2030** – in particular with the development of a measurement framework that can aid with the implementation of the energy efficiency Directive, including due stakeholder feedback.

Building on the digital compass communication, the Commission will put forward a proposal for a **European declaration on digital rights and principles** to serve as a reference framework for all Europeans, to inform and empower them regarding rights, freedoms and principles. CONNECT will continue working closely with the European Parliament and the Council to facilitate the signature of this declaration. The principles will then be monitored through an annual report on 'The state of the digital decade'. Moreover, the Commission will conduct a Eurobarometer survey to monitor the implementation of the digital rights and principles in the Member States, on an annual basis.


Our communication efforts under will focus on the digital services act and we have planned to reinforce our communication together with the digital markets act through dedicated audiovisual content and specific messages already tested in nine selected Member States. We will also communicate on all topics related to connectivity and especially on the new roaming Regulation entering into force in July 2022. We will communicate through the

digital strategy website, social media, as well as through the spokesperson service and the Commission's representations.

The relevant performance table can be found in the [Annex](#) (page 37).

Specific objective 5 A cyber resilient Europe, promoting digital identities for all Europeans, while protecting their e-privacy	Related to spending programmes: Horizon Europe, Digital Europe
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As more aspects of our lives depend on digital technologies, it is imperative that security and resilience are taken up with the utmost care. For this reason, CONNECT pays special attention to developing a cyber-secure and resilient Europe.

Following the preparatory work done in the course of 2021, the Commission will continue preparations (impact assessment as well as the proposal of the legislative text) to issue the **Cyber resilience act**  in the third quarter of 2022. This legislation aims at establishing new horizontal rules, i.e., common European cybersecurity standards for products (notably connected products) and associated services placed on the internal market.



Following the entry into force of the Regulation on the **European Cybersecurity Competence Centre** (ECCC) and the setting up of its governing board, the establishment of the centre will continue with the selection of the chair of the governing board and of the executive director, negotiations on the hosting agreement, and the designation by Member States of their respective National Coordination Centres.




As part of the implementation of the Cybersecurity act, CONNECT will continue to monitor the development of a candidate scheme for an **EU cybersecurity certification for cloud services** by the European Union Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA). The agency plans to submit the final candidate scheme in early 2022, in view of its adoption by the Commission via implementing act before the end of the second quarter of the year. After this, the first certifications could be issued, if requested, by the end of 2022.

As requested by the Commission, the European Union Cybersecurity Agency (ENISA) started preparing a **candidate scheme for 5G security** with the launch of a dedicated expert's group, as well as dialogue with the Global System's for Mobile Communication Association (GSMA – in view of using the specifications developed by this organisation). This work will continue throughout 2022.

CONNECT will continue to support the co-legislators in the negotiations for the approval of two important pieces of legislation: the **revised Directive on security of networks and**

information systems (NIS Directive)  and the **e-privacy Regulation** . The first one modernises the current legal framework, while taking account of the increased digitisation of the internal market in recent years and an evolving cybersecurity threat landscape. The second has the objective of providing a high level of privacy protection for users of electronic communications services, as well as ensuring the protection of their terminal equipment (i.e., PC, smartphone). It also provides for a level playing field for all market players in full consistency with the general data protection Regulation.



CONNECT will also support the negotiations with the co-legislators on the proposed **revised eIDAS Regulation**  that aims to create a European digital identity to share attested identity attributes (i.e., name, address, age, diplomas or professional qualifications that are affirmed to be authentic). Pilots with the Member States are planned to be launched in the last quarter of 2022.

A secure and resilient digital connectivity is a cornerstone of the Commission’s external digital policy and of the global gateway. Together with the European External Action Service (EEAS) and relevant DGs, CONNECT will continue to work on promoting European cybersecurity policies in the world, including the use of the 5G toolbox.


CONNECT’s communication efforts under this objective will focus on cybersecurity, with a focus on the adoption of the cyber resilience act. We will endeavour to communicate beyond expert and stakeholder audiences, particularly targeting younger audiences. We will communicate through the digital strategy website, DigitalEU channels on social media, as well as through the spokesperson service and the Commissions representations.

The relevant performance table can be found in the [Annex](#) (page 38).

<p style="text-align: center;">Specific objective 6</p> <p style="text-align: center;">A modern, open and pluralistic society in the digital age, where online disinformation is countered and diverse cultural content is available to all Europeans</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Related to spending programmes: Horizon Europe, Digital Europe, Creative Europe, Connecting Europe Facility – digital, InvestEU</p>
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Disinformation has the potential to harm our democracies by hampering the ability of citizens to make informed decisions, eroding trust in institutions and the media, and fomenting social divisions.



The fight against disinformation will be furthered through the agreement of the **Digital services act** , expected to be adopted by the co-legislators in 2022. These ground-breaking rules will help fight disinformation by regulating the responsibility of very large online platforms.

CONNECT will support the signatories and the new

prospective signatories of the **EU code of practice on disinformation** in the development of strengthened commitments, aligned with the guidance adopted to address the shortcomings of the code. This strengthened code should become a mitigation measure for the systemic risk linked to disinformation once the digital services act is adopted.


CONNECT will continue to monitor the actions taken by the signatories of the code of practice on disinformation to limit the impact of disinformation campaigns related to the pandemic, in particular as regards vaccines.



As provided by the **audiovisual media services Directive** (AVMSD), CONNECT will issue guidelines regarding the scope of Member States' reports on measures taken for the development of media literacy skills.

We need to stop those who threaten media freedom. Media companies cannot be treated as just another business. Their independence is essential.

President Ursula von der Leyen

Another area where CONNECT will act to strengthen the protection of the European Union's values is by proposing the **media freedom act**  which will ensure EU citizens have access to a wide and varied media offer, both offline and online. It will also confirm that media companies can operate in the internal market subject to consistent regulatory

standards on media freedom and pluralism; safeguard editorial independence of media; and foster undistorted competition between media companies by ensuring transparent and fair allocation of state resources.

In parallel, CONNECT will continue monitoring and taking action to secure the correct **implementation of audiovisual media services Directive (AVMSD)** in order to foster an effective EU internal market for media. CONNECT will also contribute to the **Commission's rule of law report 2022** by providing assessments on the state of play of media freedom and pluralism in all Member States and across the EU.

In the virtual world, equality, non-discrimination, and tolerance means ensuring that people with any type of disability can take full advantage of online services, especially when related to public services. CONNECT will therefore complete its review of the application of the **web accessibility Directive** (WAD), which was adopted to improve the functioning of the internal market and approximate accessibility requirements for websites and mobile applications of public sector bodies.



2022 will be the European year of youth. In the second quarter of the year, CONNECT will present an update of the 2012 **European strategy for a better internet for children** (BIK). This strategy protects and empowers children online through EU funding, coordination, and self-regulation. It is a global benchmark referred to by most Member States in national policies. As announced in the EU strategy on the rights of the child, the

BIK Strategy needs to be updated given the changes in children's use of digital technology and the acceleration of the digital transformation caused by COVID-19.

Another way CONNECT will support young Europeans is by contributing to some actions of the **digital education action plan (DEAP) 2021-2027**. We will support the overall digital transformation of education systems and boost the uptake of advanced technologies in teaching and learning (e.g., extended and virtual reality, AI and data technologies) and high-speed connectivity of schools. Still in the education field, CONNECT supports the development and launch of the **European student eCard** core service platform which will become fully functional in the second half of 2022, facilitating cross-border student mobility.

The recommendation on a common **data space for cultural heritage** adopted on 10 November 2021 will further contribute to the advanced digitisation, digital preservation, and reuse of high-quality data of digitised cultural heritage assets.

CONNECT will continue monitoring the implementation of the **Directive on copyright in the digital single market** and **the Directive on online television and radio programmes** which had to be transposed by Member States by June 2021.

As a follow-up to the European Parliament's resolution on the challenges of sport event organisers, CONNECT will set out actions to address **online piracy of live content**.

CONNECT will keep working with the audiovisual sector in the context of the stakeholders' dialogue aiming to agree on concrete steps to improve access to and the availability of audiovisual content across Member States, as announced in the **media and audiovisual action plan**.

CONNECT will analyse the effect of a recent decision of the European Court of Justice (Case C-265/19 RAAP) concerning the international aspects of the distribution of equitable remuneration for music performers and producers and assess whether any follow up to this decision is needed.

CONNECT will issue the reports on the application of the portability Regulation, the copyright and disabilities Directive and the 2011 term of protection Directive. Preparations will also begin for the evaluation of the Marrakesh Directive and Regulation for the blind. CONNECT will continue working on the targeted **review of the database Directive** as a part of the data act.

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.

The Commission supports the **availability and access to European news content** through multimedia actions, which aim to provide citizens with information about European issues from pan-European points of view. Actions will be implemented based on a

Commission decision on the future of the cooperation of Euronews, as well as a radio network.

In the spirit of the New European Bauhaus, **S+T+ARTS, innovation at the nexus of Science, Technology and the ARTS**, in 2022 will further emphasise the role of arts and creativity in the twin transition, building on pilot projects that put forward the role of digital and the arts in achieving responsible use of natural resources.

Our external communication will cover media freedom and pluralism, especially in view of adopting the media freedom act. We will continue our communication on disinformation together with the other services and especially DG Communication. The review of the web accessibility rules will also be a part of our communication activities. We will communicate through the digital strategy website, DigitalEU channels on social media, as well as through the spokesperson service and the Commission's representations. In the context of the European year of youth 2022, we will produce child-friendly versions of the main communications of interest to young audiences (i.e., better internet for kids and digital principles). We will continue producing innovative and attractive audio-visual content to engage youth in important discussions on the digital transformation that affect their daily lives. To this end, we aim 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.

The relevant performance table can be found in the [Annex](#) (page 39).

PART 2. Modernising the administration: main outputs for 2022

The internal control framework⁽⁹⁾ 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 **update its local human resources (HR) strategy** with a medium to long-term perspective (3–5 years), in accordance with the overall corporate HR strategy. CONNECT actively supports corporate programmes such as the junior professionals programme, ensuring a valuable pool of talent to contribute to our key policies and foster knowledge-sharing and collaboration across Commission services.

To **ensure gender balance** at all management levels by end of 2024, an additional target due by end of 2022 was defined for all Directorates-General of the Commission in April 2020. For CONNECT, this translated into three additional first female appointments at middle management level, due by end of 2022. CONNECT has already exceeded its target by the end of 2021, with two first female appointments to middle management posts already made in 2020 and three further first female appointments to middle management posts in 2021.

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., follow-up of the 2021 local female talent development programme, an internal mentoring programme and regular training and information sessions for women in pre-management functions).

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'. The annual learning and development needs analysis

⁽⁹⁾ [Communication C\(2017\)2373 - Revision of the Internal Control Framework](#)

will also integrate the new set of skills required to adapt to the new hybrid ways of working as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the forthcoming move to a new building (in Brussels). This is to ensure that people are properly equipped to deliver on political and operational priorities and for career development.

In regard to **well-being**, continuous efforts are made in this area, which are being pursued in close cooperation with the Account Management Centre 3 and have been largely extended on the Beaulieu site, within the context of the corporate Fit@work programme. 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).

With a view to maintaining a high level of staff satisfaction in the DG, despite the many ongoing human resources challenges, CONNECT will carefully analyse and follow up on the outcome of the staff satisfaction survey launched by DG Human Resources and Security at the end of 2021.

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. CONNECT



will also pursue extra internal communication complementing corporate communication, in particular on COVID-19 related issues and working arrangements to help staff coping with the pandemic.

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 (MFF) 2021- 2027. This entails a fair distribution of decreased staffing levels as a result of (partial) delegation of budget management to executive agencies and/or joint undertakings. It also includes a fair allocation of resources to cope with 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.

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 2022:

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
	Number of women designated as Head of Unit and percentage (baseline: 15 (37%) on 01/12/2019	Increase (>37%, >15)

Output	Indicator	Target
Staff Engagement Index	Staff Engagement Index	Staff engagement index of 69% - in line with Commission average - at next Staff Survey
Close monitoring and management of job quotas / budget and careful assessment of replacements for every departure, in light of the operational and political priorities	Taxation targets met within the deadlines set by the budgetary authority	Staff reduction laid down in the 2022 allocation of establishment plan posts and the appropriations for external personnel
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 the DG	Endorsement by the Management Team of the 2022 L&D priorities

B. Sound financial management

CONNECT's policies are implemented through several funding mechanisms: *Digital Europe*, *Connecting Europe Facility - digital*, the framework programme for research, *Horizon Europe* and the *Creative Europe - MEDIA* programme. The year 2022 will be a year of transition with the further take-off of the programmes of the new multiannual financial framework (MFF), while activities related to the previous MFF will still be on going.

For *Digital Europe*, CONNECT will further develop the actions needed for the full implementation of the control strategy that was specially tailored for the programme. It is based on Commission's best practices, with a combination of ex-ante and ex-post control measures in order to ensure legality, regularity and sound financial management of the money invested. CONNECT plays a central role in working with the different services and bodies involved in the implementation of *Digital Europe* and securing the programme's management.

CONNECT supervises several executive agencies. It is in charge of the Key Digital Technologies (KDT) Joint Undertaking, the EuroHPC Joint Undertaking and a specific body for Cybersecurity. CONNECT will work to set up the Smart Networks and Services Joint Undertaking (SNS JU), created in November 2021. CONNECT also holds the responsibility for the European Union Agency (ENISA) and the BEREC Office. In addition, the DG also acts as the designated service under a delegation agreement with the European Investment Bank (EIB), in the context of the CEF financial instruments and under a delegation agreement with the European investment fund (EIF) for the cultural and creative sectors guarantee facility.

Digital is an important building block of the *Recovery and Resilience Facility* as part of NextGenerationEU, with a minimum of 20% of expenditure to be invested in digital. CONNECT re-organised its services to be able to play its role in the implementation of the facility.

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.

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 2022:

Output	Indicator	Target
Effective controls: Legal and regular transactions	Risk at payment	becomes < 2 % of relevant expenditure
	Estimated risk at closure	becomes < 2% of relevant expenditure
Efficient controls	Budget execution and / or time-to-pay	remains > 95% of payment appropriations and remains > 95% of payments (in value) on time
Economical controls	Overall estimated cost of controls	remains < 2 % 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 (OLAF). The strategy was updated in 2021 ⁽¹⁰⁾. 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 MFF 2021-2027 and the legacy (i.e., programmes of the previous MFF).

In the context of the update of the CONNECT anti-fraud strategy and in view of the launch of digital Europe, a dedicated fraud risk assessment was performed in 2021 to develop a fraud risk profile for the specific areas of the programme.

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 action plan is regularly monitored by the Steering Board and the Executive Committee of

⁽¹⁰⁾ To adopted in the beginning 2022.

the Common Implementation Centre and the Fraud and Irregularities in Research (FAIR) Committee.

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, IT developments). CONNECT will continue to implement awareness campaigns and deliver training sessions on anti-fraud topics, especially related to grant management.



The COVID-19 pandemic has pushed the EU Institutions to enable the EU budget to support the response to the crisis, adding the necessary resources and flexibility in using them. New fraud patterns emerged. CONNECT will continue monitoring the risk of fraud and, where necessary, define and implement new risk-mitigation measures.

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 and OLAF, 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) ⁽¹¹⁾ aimed at the prevention, detection and correction ⁽¹²⁾ of fraud.

Main outputs in 2022:

Output	Indicator	Target
Implementation of the anti-fraud strategies (Research Anti-Fraud Strategy, CONNECT)	% of implementation of actions planned in the anti-fraud strategies	100%
Participation in the Fraud and Irregularities in Research Committee	Number of meetings	2
Fraud risk awareness raising training and similar anti-fraud training sessions	% of newcomers trained (=staff involved in procurement and grant management for less than 2 years).	80%
Cooperation with OLAF	Participation in the Fraud Prevention and Detection Network meetings	Participation in all Network meetings

⁽¹¹⁾ 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'.


⁽¹²⁾ Correction of fraud is an umbrella term, which notably refers to the recovery of amounts unduly spent and to administrative sanctions.

Use of the anti-plagiarism tool	Number of requests to use the anti-plagiarism tool	More than 8 requests
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D. Digital transformation and information management

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT



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 European Commission digital strategy and, in particular, the digital solution modernisation plans to which we have actively contributed with ideas and proposals on key areas – namely, DataStrategy@EC, the Right2Innovate, Stakeholder Engagement and Paperless organisation. In 2022, the activity on digital transformation in CONNECT will further consolidate lessons learnt, good practices and new initiatives resulting from the COVID-19 crisis, including the forthcoming HR strategy and the rolling out of the *Recovery and Resilience Facility*. On  DataStrategy@EC, CONNECT will:

- Organise with HR a specialised training session on the topic, targeting policy officers for effective use of data in policymaking.
- Continue to offer internally and other DGs tools and services developed for data analysis (Doris public Consultation Dashboard, Drive-in, Chatbot, Knowledge Graph technology, Machine Learning services ...).

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.

On the Right2Innovate, in 2022, CONNECT will continue to assist colleagues with automated text processing and dash-boarding capabilities to efficiently handle recovery and resilience facility and recover and resilience plan documents. 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 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. Regarding collaborative working, drawing on the experience gained in supporting the pilot of Microsoft 365 and welcome domain, CONNECT will complete the adoption and implementation of these platforms in 2022 and will complete the migration of CONNECTED

to them. Processes for document management follow and apply corporate rules, procedures, and practices, with a particular attention to the digital preservation strategy. The document management officer (DMO) regularly informs and reminds the DG colleagues about rules, procedures and practices. The network of document management correspondents acts as a bridge between the DMO and the services. With the dual role as CAD (*Centre d'Administration des Documents*) team leader, the DMO ensures that the individual services implement the rules, procedures, and practices and follows closely the actions in the framework of the digital preservation strategy.

In the field of cybersecurity and IT security, CONNECT's key priority areas are:

- Security awareness raising: CONNECT aims at raising awareness of staff on cybersecurity related threats. Staff will be informed and trained through the corporate Cyber Aware programme. Dedicated sessions for the management team and the system owners will be organised.
- IT Security Risk Management: To defend CONNECT from cyber-attacks that can compromise IT systems and essential services, CONNECT will monitor and improve its capability and maturity in identifying and managing security risks. Since CONNECT owns several mission-critical IT systems, all CONNECT stakeholders have to be aware of the cybersecurity risks and to shoulder their respective responsibilities.

All CONNECT IT systems will have an IT security plan, a document that comprises the risks identified, the risk treatment decisions, the measures to be applied for managing the risks and their implementation plan.

DATA PROTECTION

With the entry into force of Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 (EUDPR), the Commission adopted the Commission's data protection action plan⁽¹³⁾, which identifies the main objectives and priorities to ensure compliance with the new data protection rules. Whereas many areas of this document have already been implemented, there are others that require regular attention. This is the case, for instance, for training sessions and awareness raising. The Directorate-General's 2020-2024 Strategic Plan has introduced the objective that all Commission staff (100 %) obtain awareness about the requirements of Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 by 2024. This requires that, each year, progress is made to fulfil the goal by the aforementioned date. The Data Protection Coordinator (DPC) will continue to organise data protection training and awareness sessions.

Where new processing activities are identified, the establishment of a new data protection record is necessary. If this is the case, those records will be registered in the data protection records management system (DPMS).

⁽¹³⁾ C(2018) 7432 final

Special attention will be provided to the fact that agreements with external processors are done in compliance with Article 29 of the EUDPR. Operational controllers will be reminded of their obligations before the signature of procurement contracts.

The DPO office has organised a working group to draft procedures and templates for handling requests from data subjects to exercise their rights. The templates will be documented internally for use by operational controllers, once adopted by the DPO.

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 2022:

I. List of key initiatives on digital transformation:

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	50%
Implementation of the Digital Preservation Strategy	Number of IT systems that can be decommissioned after a preservation assessment	0
Implementation of the corporate IT security framework for CONNECT's IT systems ⁽¹⁴⁾	Percentage of implementation of the corporate IT security framework for CONNECT's IT systems	>90%
Implementation of the IT Security Risk Management	Percentage of CONNECT's IT systems with an IT security plan	100%
Awareness in cybersecurity threats	Awareness raising events for management team and system owners	2
Specialised training sessions on data4policy in collaboration with HR	Number of sessions organised	at least 3 training sessions organised
Migrating colleagues to M365 and TEAMS	Percentage of colleague adopting M365 and Welcome	100% colleagues on Teams
Supporting digital collaboration and paperless processes	Adoption of the Collaboration Blueprint by colleagues	at least 50% Teams Groups include the Blueprint as a Tab

II. List of key actions on data protection:

Output	Indicator	Target
DPC to organise tailor-made training sessions	Number of sessions organised	2 training sessions

⁽¹⁴⁾ The IT security framework at the Commission, built around the legal base - the Commission decision 2017/46 of 10 January 2017, the IT Security Risk Management (ITSRM) methodology, the IT Security Strategy, the IT security standards, and guidelines.

	% of staff trained about the requirements of Regulation (EU) 2018/1725	45%
Establishing records for new processing operations	Percentage of new identified processing operations reflected in created records	100% of identified new processing operations
Note reminding operational controllers of their article 29 IDPR obligations.	Note sent to operational controllers	Q4 2022
Internal documentation of DPO templates for handling requests from data subjects	Percentage of internal documentation and availability of templates	100% of new templates documented and made available to CONNECT operational controllers

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), the DG envisages the continued use of the Green@CONNECT space to further promote a number of internal and corporate initiatives to improve staff awareness on how daily actions (both inside and outside the workplace) can benefit the environment.

The main objectives for 2022 will focus on these actions:

- Reduction of **greenhouse gas emissions**: related to buildings and workplaces, reduction of staff missions, and staff commuting.
- **Energy saving** by participating in **energy saving actions**, such as end of the year closure of buildings, **Paper consumption actions, by promoting internal paperless** operational procedures – such as digital-only grant approval procedures, financial circuits, and e-signatories.
- **Waste management actions**, by participating in the installation of waste-sorting station projects in Brussels and support the Brussels Infrastructure Office (OIB) promotional/communication/awareness actions and campaigns with local staff.

CONNECT will continue to foster a 'green-culture' inside the DG by stimulating the use of environmentally friendly means of transportation and by facilitating the use of IT solutions for meetings. Staff is informed about the EMAS efforts via a specific space on Connected. Key messages are communicated to staff via Connected and a regular CONNECT newsletter. The Diversity and Inclusion Group, consisting of representatives of each directorate, is informed about the EMAS actions at every meeting.



Since 2021, the COVID-19 sanitary situation has accelerated the settlement of new ways of working with a high level of teleworking amongst DG staff. The immediate

results were the reduction of paper consumption, the increase of remote meetings, including evaluations, thus avoiding business trips, and decreasing of commuting from home to the office.

Most importantly, the Brussels-based operations of the DG will move to new premises, organised as a dynamic, collaborative space. These new working arrangements will be in line with the Commission communication on sustainable buildings and working space, thus contributing to the achievement of the Commission overall environmental targets.

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 2022:

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

Output	Indicator	Target
Staff awareness actions to reduce energy use in the framework of EMAS corporate campaigns and/or awareness actions about DG’s total energy consumption in collaboration with OIB/OIL	Statistics on Green at Connect space, internal newsletter and Diversity and Inclusions Network	Increase the number of visits by 10%
	Number of actions	2
Participation in the end of the year energy saving action	Number of buildings participating	At least 2 of DG buildings participating
Paperless working methods at DG level	Number of actions	2

II. Reducing CO₂, equivalent CO₂ and other atmospheric emissions

Output	Indicator	Target
Optimise and gradually reduce CO ₂ emissions.	Number of business trips	Reduce number of business trips by at least 30 % (baseline 2019: 3665)
Staff awareness on digital pollution and gradual change of behaviours avoiding heavy emails, encouraging the use of ICT platforms.	Number of awareness actions	2

III. Reducing and management of waste

Output	Indicator	Target
Staff awareness actions about waste reduction and sorting	Number or awareness actions	2

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

The forthcoming move to the new L-51 building for Brussels-based staff will lead to economies in terms of office space occupation.

More importantly, the brand-new office will be 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 IT 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 draft working time decision.

These new working modes will certainly 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 2020, Horizon Europe, Digital Europe and Connecting Europe Facility - Digital

Main outputs in 2022:

New policy initiatives

Output	Indicator	Target
 European chips act	Adoption by the Commission	Q2 2022

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	6000 unique browsers
Increase the followers and engagement rate of the main of the DigitalEU Twitter and Instagram channels, maintain the current baseline on Facebook*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of followers • Engagement rate • Mentions • Clear branding through hashtags and visual identity • A coherent and visionary social media strategy, streamlined with the corporate approach 	<p>TWITTER: increase the current baseline (around 109 thousand) by 11% and have 120 thousand followers by the end of the year). Maintain the average of 6.000 interactions per month.</p> <p>INSTAGRAM: In 2022, the account should continue to be our main focus for growth and reach 15 thousand followers, while increasing the average interactions per post to 55.</p> <p>FACEBOOK: 2022 goals: A change in strategy to increase interactions (such as longer posts in blog-style and a change in posting rhythm). Maintain the current baseline (33.16) of followers.</p>

Web and social media indicators for external communication are cross-cutting through all specific objectives (marked with *)

Other important outputs

Output	Indicator	Target
First work programme of the Smart Networks and Services Joint Undertaking	Adoption by the Commission	Q1 2022
First call for the Smart Networks and Services Joint Undertaking	Launch of the call under SNS JU under Horizon Europe (budget of EUR 240 million)	Q1 2022

Operational launch of the Smart Networks and Services Joint Undertaking	Recruitment of the Executive Director and staff, office selection, and signature of service agreements with horizontal Commission services (BUDG, HR, DIGIT, OIB)	Q3 2022
Launch of a first wave of Smart Networks and Services Joint Undertaking projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Launch minimum 30 projects addressing the performance and sustainability objectives of 6G - One flagship project representing a coordinated EU view of 6G and supporting standardisation - 1 large scale EU infrastructure for pilots and testbeds 	Q4 2022
General assembly of the Industrial alliance on processors and semiconductors technology	First general assembly	Q1/2 2022
Important project of common European interest on microelectronics	Completion of prenotification and preparation of projects under the IPCEI on microelectronics	Q1-3 2022
Launch of a first wave of the Key Digital Technologies Joint Undertaking projects for an operational EU budget of EUR 160 million	Launch minimum 15 projects addressing R&I in electronic components and systems	Q4 2022
EuroQCI initiative	Launch of calls and signature of grants under Connecting Europe Facility (cross-border linking of national quantum communication infrastructures – budget of EUR 200 million)	Q3 2022
Launch of the destination Earth initiative	Signature of the Contribution Agreements between CONNECT and the ESA, ECMWF and EUMETSAT and official launch of the initiative	Q1 2022
European Blockchain Partnership (EBP) and the European Blockchain Services Infrastructure (EBSI)	<p>Further joint development and support to deployment of EBSI and its use cases, as well as the launch of a regulatory sandbox, through procurement</p> <p>Launch of the call for proposals to support EBSI and use cases in MS, support to standardization activities.</p>	<p>All along 2022</p> <p>Q1 2022</p>
Startup Europe	A new wave of Startup Europe projects launched under horizon Europe in cooperation with the European innovation council and the European innovation	Q3 2022

	ecosystem programme.	
Horizon Europe	Signature of grant agreements under the horizon Europe programme in cluster 3 (civil security for society, call increased cybersecurity) – budget of EUR 67.5 million); 14 projects	Q2 2022
Horizon Europe	Signature of grant agreements under the horizon Europe programme in cluster 4 (digital, industry and space, 4 calls) budget of EUR 658.9 million); around 124 projects	Q2 2022
Horizon Europe	Signature of grant agreements under the horizon Europe programme in cluster 4 (digital, industry and space, 1 call) budget of EUR 51 million); around 13 projects	Q3 2022
Horizon Europe	Signature of grant agreements under the horizon Europe programme in cluster 4 (digital, industry and space, 4 calls) budget of EUR 401 million); around 60 projects	Q4 2022
Horizon Europe	Launch of a call under the horizon Europe programme in cluster 3 (civil security for society, call increased cybersecurity) – budget of EUR 67.3 million)	Q2 2022
Horizon Europe	Launch of 2 calls under the horizon Europe programme in cluster 4 (digital, industry and space) budget of EUR 175.5 million)	Q2 2022
Digital Europe	Signature of grant agreements under the digital Europe programme (from the first set of launched calls, 6 calls) budget of EUR 548 million)	Q4 2022
Digital Europe	Launch of the second set of calls under the digital Europe programme for a budget of EUR 313 million)	Q1 2022
Digital Europe	Signature of grant agreements under digital Europe for at least a budget of EUR 200 million of the second set of calls	Q4 2022
Digital Europe	Launch of calls under digital Europe programme for a budget	Q3 2022

	of EUR 118 million)	
Digital Europe	Signature of grant agreements under the digital Europe (6 calls) budget of EUR 548 million)	Q4 2022


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, Digital Europe and Connecting Europe Facility - Digital

Main outputs in 2022:

New policy initiatives

Output	Indicator	Target
 Data act	Adoption by the Commission	Q1 2022


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
High value datasets Implementing Act	Adoption by the Commission	Q1 2022
Report on the evaluation of the Regulation on the free flow of non-personal data	Submission to the European Parliament, to the Council and to the European Economic and Social Committee	Q4 2022
Important project of common European interest on next generation cloud and edge	Start of activities	Q3 2022
European Alliance for Industrial Data, Edge and Cloud	First general assembly	Q1 2022
	Submission of first deliverables	Q3 2022
EU Cloud Rulebook	Publication	Q4 2022

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 Europe and Digital Europe***Main outputs in 2022:****Other important outputs**

Output	Indicator	Target
Launch of Member States' Group on Artificial Intelligence and Digitisation of Business	High-level meetings	Q1 and Q3 2022
 Proposal for a Regulation laying down requirements for artificial intelligence (AI act)	Agreement of the co-legislators	Estimated for Q4 2022

External communication actions

Output	Indicator	Target
4 th European AI 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 *)

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, Digital Europe and Connecting Europe Facility - Digital***Main outputs in 2022:****Initiatives linked to regulatory simplification and burden reduction**

Output	Indicator	Target
Review of the Broadband Cost Reduction Directive	Adoption by the Commission	Q2 2022 PLAN/2020/7443


Public consultations

Output	Indicator	Target
Targeted consultation on the Delegated Act on effective access to emergency services ('112')	Closure of the targeted consultation	Q1 2022

External communication actions

Output	Indicator	Target
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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
Signature to the European Declaration on Digital rights and principles by the European Parliament and the Council	Signature	Q2 2022
Launch of the 'early wave' of connecting Europe facility - digital projects in relation to 5G coverage of cross border corridors	- at least 3 projects launched with a budget of EUR 100 million - targeting in total 1000 km of deployment as final project outcome	Q4 2022
Set-up the Initial Network of European Digital Innovation Hubs (EDIH) from all designated candidate entities	Operation of the EDIHs under Digital Europe	Q4 2022
Expansion of 5G coverage towards the digital decade objectives	5G coverage of EU population at least 22% (14% in 2021)	Q4 2022
 Digital Services Act and Digital Markets Act	Agreement of the co-legislators	Q2 2022
Recommendation replacing the next generation access (NGA) and the non-discrimination and costing methodologies (NDCM) recommendations	Adoption by the Commission	Q2/3 2022
Secured wi-fi authentication services	Launch of the operational service	Mid-2022
Digital partnership with Japan	Signature	Q2/3 2022
Digital partnership with Korea	Signature	Q4 2022
Digital partnership with Singapore	Signature	Q4 2022
Roaming guidelines at wholesale and retail level	Adoption	Q4 2022


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 and Digital Europe

Main outputs in 2022:

New policy initiatives

Output	Indicator	Target
 European cyber resilience act	Adoption by the Commission	Q3 2022

Public consultations		
Output	Indicator	Target
Open public consultation on European cyber resilience act	Close of public consultation	Q2 2022
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
Commission implementing act for the adoption of the EU cybersecurity certification scheme for cloud services	Adoption by the Commission	Q2 2022
 Amendment of Regulation (EU) 910/2014 as regards establishing a framework for a European digital identity	Agreement of the co-legislators	Q4 2022
 Proposal for a Directive on measures for a high common level of cybersecurity across the Union, repealing Directive (EU) 2016/1148 (NIS Directive)	Agreement of the co-legislators	Q2 2022
 Proposal for a Regulation concerning the respect for private life and the protection of personal data in electronic communications and repealing Directive 2002/58/EC (Regulation on privacy and electronic communications)	Agreement of the co-legislators	Q3/Q4 2022


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, Digital Europe, Creative Europe, Connecting Europe Facility – Digital and InvestEU

Main outputs in 2022:

New policy initiatives

Output	Indicator	Target
 European media freedom act (EMFA)	Adoption by the Commission	Q3 2022 PLAN/2021/11882

Update of the better internet for children strategy (BIK strategy)	Adoption by the Commission	Q2 2022 PLAN/2021/11233
Evaluations and fitness checks		
Output	Indicator	Target
Web accessibility directive review	Adoption by the Commission	Q2 2022 PLAN/2020/8486
Public consultations		
Output	Indicator	Target
Open public consultation on European media freedom act	Closure of the open public consultation	Q1 2022
Enforcement actions		
Output	Indicator	Target
Assessment of Member States' transposition of Directive on copyright in the digital single market	100% of the completeness checks	Q4 2022
Assessment of Member States' transposition of the Directive on online television and radio programs	100% of the completeness checks	Q4 2022
External communication actions		
Output	Indicator	Target
Communication actions in the context of the European Year of Youth	Number of actions	At least 5 actions
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
Strengthen commitments under the EU code of practice on disinformation	Signature by the code signatories	Q1 2022
AVMSD guidelines regarding the scope of Member States' reports on media literacy measures	Adoption by the Commission	Q3 2022
Rule of law report, media freedom and pluralism parts	Adoption by the Commission	Q3 2022
European Student eCard core service platform (CEF project EDSSI managed by HADEA)	Core service platform functional	Q3 2022
Report on the application of the Portability Regulation	Publication	Q2 2022
Report on the copyright and disabilities Directive	Publication	Q1 2022

Report on the application of the 2011 term of protection Directive	Publication	Q2 2022
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