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DIGITALEUROPE's views on simplifying and harmonising environmental regulation

Executive summary

DIGITALEUROPE strongly supports the European Commission's efforts to streamline environmental legislation, reduce administrative burden, and create a coherent framework that fosters innovation and sustainability. Current legislation is fragmented, duplicative, and administratively heavy, diverting resources away from innovation and sustainability goals.

Major EU laws such as the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products regulation, the Packaging and Packaging Waste regulation or the Right to Repair directive have been adopted in the last four years to further drive the transition to a circular economy. These new initiatives will themselves require many pieces of secondary legislation to be implemented. Today, **a single electronic product may be covered by more than 35 different EU environmental regulations**. The increasingly complex legal framework can only yield tangible benefits if the compliance burden doesn't negatively affect innovation and investments.

We support a **harmonised framework** that enhances Europe's competitiveness while safeguarding environmental integrity.

Our key recommendations:

- ▶▶ Ensure alignment across sustainability frameworks to avoid duplication and conflicting requirements.
- ▶▶ Promote digital-first reporting and labelling solutions (QR codes, online documentation) over outdated paper-based requirements.
- ▶▶ Discontinue the SCIP database and review substance requirements for clarity
- ▶▶ Maintain a risk-based approach to RoHS
- ▶▶ Streamline EU circularity and waste legislation
- ▶▶ Streamline permitting and reporting for data centers
- ▶▶ Simplify the EU Deforestation regulation

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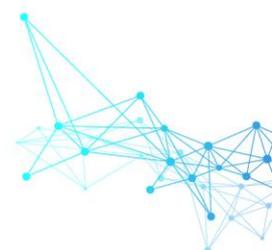
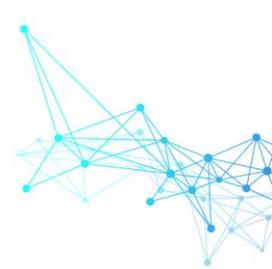




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Streamlining and harmonising reporting requirements

We support the initiative to streamline and simplify environmental regulations, particularly those related to reporting, notification, and Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes. Clear, harmonised and efficient regulations will allow the industry to focus resources on innovation and achieving environmental goals, rather than on navigating complex and fragmented regimes.

There are reporting requirements that are overlapping across different legislations (i.e., substances of concern in REACH¹, Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation², Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation³, Medical Device Regulation⁴/In Vitro Medical Devices Regulation⁵, EU Green Public Procurement guidelines), **different tools** (i.e., SCIP, upcoming Digital Product Passport) **and varied national transpositions** (eg. Waste of Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive⁶) that lead to duplication of information and increased administrative overhead. For example, energy performance metrics under the Energy Efficiency Directive⁷ and the EU Code of Conduct for Data Centre Energy Efficiency, sustainability criteria for data hosting under the EU Taxonomy, and product-specific requirements under Ecodesign, while related, often demand distinct reporting formats or processes.

Without careful alignment, these initiatives risk creating conflicting compliance and policy incentives or duplicative reporting burdens. Therefore, **any current simplification effort should anticipate and integrate the structure and scope of incoming regulatory instruments** to ensure coherence and avoid future regulatory friction.

Regulations should be **clear, interoperable, and pan-European**, replacing fragmented national schemes with a single EU-wide framework and preventing Member States from requiring additional data or categorisation. Typically, each Member State and Producer Responsibility System (PRO) has its own template for EPR reporting with dedicated data needs that go beyond reporting needs for the EU. This results in more than fifty different reporting templates that have to be filled in at least once per year by companies (pending reporting frequency) for the EPR schemes.

A single pan-European interoperable digital portal (incl. Standardised formats) for all reporting would be a major improvement. Similarly, **a EU regulatory dashboard** showing the different timelines, overlaps and compliance thresholds across different legislations would facilitate adoption from actors under scope.

Reporting should focus on **meaningful data that drive environmental outcomes**, not redundant metrics. We emphasize the necessity of critically reviewing reporting and information obligations to:

- eliminate duplicate reporting requirements

¹ Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 concerning the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH)

² Regulation (EU) 2024/1781 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2024 establishing a framework for the setting of ecodesign requirements for sustainable products

³ Regulation (EU) 2025/40 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 December 2024 on packaging and packaging waste

⁴ Regulation (EU) 2017/745 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2017 on medical devices

⁵ Regulation (EU) 2017/746 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2017 on in vitro diagnostic medical devices

⁶ Directive 2012/19/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 4 July 2012 on waste electrical and electronic equipment

⁷ Directive (EU) 2023/1791 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 September 2023 on energy efficiency

- review content and reduce to essential criteria
- remove information requirements that are not needed by the intended target group (e.g., dismantling instructions for recyclers of standard products like PCs, monitors, etc.)
- review templates and frequency of reporting
- protect commercially sensitive data and allowing justified opt-outs.
- suspend reporting and information requirements until harmonized standards are available.

Digitalising labelling and documentation

Product documentation

We recommend moving away from **paper-based product requirements** (e.g. safety guides, conformity declarations, instructions for use etc as required under ESPR, Battery regulation etc) and allowing **digital labelling** (QR codes, websites, e-documents) across all sectors.

We welcome the EU's initiative (Omnibus IV) to give manufacturers the option to provide product documentation digitally. This transition is essential to reduce regulatory burden, advance environmental objectives and align EU product legislation with the digital age.

DIGITALEUROPE calls for adjusting the Blue Guide as an immediate non-legislative action, followed by an omnibus proposal aligning the wording of New Legislative Framework legislation to add the option for economic actors to move to full digital documentation.

At this stage, it is crucial not to conflate moving to paperless documentation with the implementation of the Digital Product Passport (DPP), as doing so may delay modernising EU product legislation and impede achievable savings in the near term.

- ▶▶ See DIGITALEUROPE paper ["Less paper, more standards: The case for digitalisation and for repairing, not replacing, Europe's standardisation system"](#)
- ▶▶ See DIGITALEUROPE paper ["The Download: Targeted adjustments for a future-ready EU product framework"](#)

Labels

The requirement to physically label packaging or products is a costly exercise, but it is also not a viable option from many points of view, especially when products are sold in many EU countries, each requiring information in their official languages.

Digitalising energy labels could help save millions of printed colored paper sheets and million of euros for manufacturers of appliances (TVs, cooling and heating units, smartphones etc) subject to the obligation to provide a printed energy label in box of every unit sold under the Energy Labelling



Regulation⁸. Not only does a digital energy label prevent paper waste, but it also avoids consuming resources to produce paper and ink, it reduces transportation emissions associated with moving documentation between supplier sites and consumers, and enables more efficient product packaging.

When purchasing online, consumers receive all necessary information related to energy efficiency and energy labels directly in the online platforms they use. Retailers can easily access the necessary labels via the EPREL database or other sources, print them and apply them on appliances on displays.

The outdated **crossed-out wheellie bin symbol** prescribed by the WEEE directive should also be replaced with digital labelling, such as QR codes, providing consumers with actionable information on how to recycle their products.

It must nonetheless be understood that, when laying down requirements on e-labelling, any digital solution must be **technology neutral**, to allow flexibility of compliance to the manufacturers. Digital solutions are not only e-labelling but also allowing for certain information to be present on the manufacturer's website.

Discontinuing the SCIP Database and reviewing substance information requirements

Benefits of the SCIP database are disproportionate to its costs

DIGITALEUROPE supports discontinuing the SCIP database due to the high administrative burden needed to meet the reporting obligations and maintain the data following Substances of Very High Concern (SVHC) candidate list updates. This effort is disproportionate to the database's limited use by recyclers and consumers (source: [ECHA](#)). Visiting the SCIP database on the web and searching for a product name, model number or serial number is reported as taking too much time and effort.

SCIP compliance requires significant resource investment, with companies needing to submit individual dossiers for each article and substance combination, potentially requiring numerous submissions for single product. The digital sector faces particular challenges due to high component complexity in electronic products:

- 250 substances must be tracked and reported at the lowest article level, creating a highly complex and resource-intensive process.
- Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) depend on supplier data, but many suppliers lack sufficient knowledge of chemical legislation, leading to over-declarations (e.g., SVHCs like Lead Oxide) and repeated review cycles.
- Many suppliers outsource reporting to third parties with limited expertise and serve multiple OEMs, yet weak enforcement shifts the burden to OEMs.
- The biannual ECHA candidate list updates, without a grandfathering mechanism, require retroactive amendments for existing products.

⁸ Regulation (EU) 2017/1369 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 4 July 2017 setting a framework for energy labelling

- The lack of standardized compliance tools in ICT (unlike the automotive sector) hinders data sharing and consistency.
- Technical limitations of the SCIP portal (e.g., delayed listings, limited support, TARIC codes not matching custom requirements) disrupt workflows and risk customer dissatisfaction.

Additionally, in complex electronic devices, the substance of highest concern is often contained in very small quantities in tiny parts of the product. Detailed information on these microscopic parts (article category, material category) is not helpful to the recycler, since the presence of an SVHC would usually not affect the final, often metallurgic treatment process⁹.

The repeal of the SCIP obligations should be done at the level of the **Waste Framework Directive (WFD)**¹⁰ to avoid regulatory loopholes. The European Commission should also ensure that discontinuation of the EU SCIP does not result in Member States driving new initiatives to demand the same level of information in a database.

Reviewing substance information requirements

We believe substance information requirements shall be fully reviewed, so as to **ensure that data is only submitted once** and that transparency is properly ensured along the value chain.

A number of legislations, especially the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR) and Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), vaguely define substance of concern (SoC). In particular, substances that negatively affect the reuse and recycling of materials (point d of the definition) are included in the SoC scope. Unfortunately, this class of substance is subject to multiple interpretation, raising liability and enforceability concerns. We further note that this definition may potentially cover any substance placed on the market, and therefore raising proportionality and competitiveness risks – most notably when manufacturers / preparers are required to report on the presence of these substances in their products or sites.

The EU already has a **comprehensive and effective regulatory framework for the safe management of chemicals and waste in place**. Examples include the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) Regulation, the Restriction of Hazardous Substances (RoHS) Directive¹¹, and the Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) Regulation. The ESPR should complement these frameworks, not duplicate them and must avoid risking the implementation of circularity goals as laid down in Circular Economy Action Plan¹² and the announced Circular Economy Act¹³.

As a conclusion we believe that the **existing SoC concept should be abandoned and removed** from ESPR and all legal texts in which it is referenced. A better solution would be to **use the REACH Candidate**

⁹ For example, as an additive in steel alloys, lead, being an SVHC, passes into a gaseous state and does not remain in the molten mass.

¹⁰ Directive 2008/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on waste

¹¹ Directive 2011/65/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 8 June 2011 on the restriction of the use of certain hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment

¹² Circular Economy Action plan

¹³ Circular Economy Act



List to set information requirements, including substances that are candidate for restrictions. The Candidate List is well-known in industry and no additional list should be introduced. This would properly advance the non-toxic environment agenda.

Maintaining a risk-based approach for RoHS compliance

DIGITALEUROPE would also like to highlight some **serious concerns on RoHS, whereby the proposal included within the Omnibus IV published in May 2025 is to facilitate the introduction of technical requirements for RoHS compliance through common specifications.**

Common specifications can serve as an interim tool in the absence of harmonised standards, but it is important to ensure that their use is only employed where their role is demonstrated to be necessary with transparent conditions and justifications, and that they are developed (unlike delegated acts) under the framework and as part of the procedures provided for (as a precedent) in Article 20 of the Machinery Regulation ((EU) 2023/1230).

In the particular case of RoHS, the harmonised EN IEC 63000 standard already successfully plays a critical role in supporting environmental compliance and global trade by providing a robust framework, applying a risk-based approach, for documenting the material composition of electrical and electronic products. Recognised internationally, EN IEC 63000 aligns with international best practices, promoting consistency across markets and reducing the administrative burden for global manufacturers. Like other harmonised standards, the EN IEC 63000 was developed by means of a collaborative and inclusive bottom-up process which ensures that standards are technically robust, indicate the state of the art, and reflect a broad consensus across stakeholders and geographies in a transparent manner.

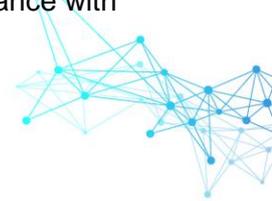
The draft Omnibus IV proposals go against this principle of transparency, giving the European Commission the ability to introduce common specifications in RoHS that go beyond - or reinterpret - the EN IEC 63000 or alter the substance of the RoHS Directive, which creates legal uncertainty for manufacturers. To maintain trust and legitimacy, common specifications must reflect the legislator's clear intent and not serve as a backdoor to new regulatory obligations outside of the ordinary legislative procedure.

For these reasons, **DIGITALEUROPE asks the European Commission to reconsider the current (May 2025) proposal to introduce common specifications.** As an alternative, we would strongly advocate using the wording of Article 20 of the Machinery Regulation ((EU) 2023/1230) as a template for any changes to RoHS as this clearly defines a transparent framework for the development, use and withdrawal of common specifications.

▶ See DIGITALEUROPE paper ["Less paper, more standards: The case for digitalisation and for repairing, not replacing, Europe's standardisation system"](#)

Harmonising and streamlining the EU circularity and waste legislation

A truly seamless circular Single Market is essential for Europe's future – and should be a priority. **Divergent waste rules**, such as France's Triman and Spain's national requirements, force companies to create country-specific packaging, undermining scale, digital-by-default principles and compliance with emerging EU regulations on batteries and packaging waste.





We support **converting directives into directly applicable regulations** to reduce fragmentation and hence support harmonisation of the provisions for authorised representatives for extended producer responsibility (EPR).

Facilitating shipment of non-hazardous e-waste in the EU

Non-hazardous e-waste should be treated as a valuable resource to meet recycling targets and reduce reliance on virgin resources, rather than a liability. We urge **for maintaining non-hazardous intra-EU e-waste shipments under green-list status beyond 2027 to support reuse, recycling, and raw material recovery**.

Applying Prior Informed Consent (PIC) notifications to all intra-EU e-waste, including non-hazardous waste, would increase complexity, costs, and administrative burdens, hindering scaling of remanufacturing, recycling, and raw material recovery.

Current fragmentation and varied PIC fees across Member States create inefficiencies, complexity in obtaining the necessary documentation, and high costs of compliance; extending PIC to non-hazardous waste would further impede cross-border waste movement and market development. This would also conflict with EU policies like the Circular Economy Action (CEA) Plan, ESPR, and Critical Raw Materials Act, undermining circular economy objectives.

We also suggest that **general PIC notifications be granted for up to five years for pre-consented facilities**. Initial PIC notification approvals take months, making three years from the date of the initially requested shipment a short window of time before repeating the burdensome administrative process without changed circumstances. A longer duration would further the EU's circular economy policy objectives and reduce regulatory burden (for regulators and businesses) without any adverse environmental impact risk

Further, general PIC notifications for pre-consented facilities should be able **to cover shipments from multiple waste generators from different site locations in the same exporting country, or even in locations within different EU countries**. This would significantly reduce the administrative burden for companies operating in multiple locations, especially within the same country, as well as streamline regulator reviews, without in any way undermining environmental protections and consent to shipments from all involved countries.

▶▶ [See DIGITALEUROPE paper on the Waste Shipment Regulation](#)

Simplifying EPR requirements : learnings from the WEEE directive

Reporting obligations should be harmonised across the EU to eliminate unnecessary burdens on producers and enhance the comparability of data. As part of the upcoming review of the WEEE directive, we encourage the European Commission to propose a **standardised WEEE reporting template** in order to reduce administrative complexity and improve data quality.

National schemes that introduce **WEEE fee eco-modulation** also lack harmonisation and create market distortions. The existence of national eco-modulation criteria and methodologies creates conflicting policy incentives, without clear environmental benefits. Nationally imposed price differences contradict the single market.



Such practices should be prohibited as should the **visibility of WEEE fees for ICT products**, which adds unnecessary administrative burden without demonstrable environmental benefits.

▶▶ [See DIGITALEUROPE paper on the revision of the WEEE directive](#)

▶▶ [See Joint industry priorities for the Circular Economy Act](#)

Clarifying PPWR requirements before application

DIGITALEUROPE is calling to **push out the application date of PPWR from 12 Aug 2026 to 1 Jan 2027** given significant practical and legal challenges, mainly in the context of extended producer responsibility:

- the current application date starting in the middle of the financial year results in two legal regimes within one calendar year;
- national implementing measures will likely not be ready in time (this is quite certain for Germany);
- questions on key legal matters at EU-level are still unclear (e.g. manufacturer and producer definitions, responsibilities for logistics service providers for transport packaging).
- hence, producer responsibility organisations, producers and municipalities are unable to enter into contracts, plan quantities, or calculate services.

Providing clarity on the Batteries regulation¹⁴

Environmental regulations should also be pragmatic. For instance, some provisions of the Batteries Regulation (Art. 11) cause delays and legal uncertainty that have held up production and investment decisions on manufacturing lines. Waiting until early 2026 to know how a product should be designed to be allowed on the market less than a year later is an unenviable position to be in.

Manufacturers of innovative new products rely on appropriate and future-proof rules, including knowing that they can count on clear derogations, where needed and justified. We believe it is not justifiable to require the application of Art. 11(1) to products that are repairable by professionals and call upon the Commission in light of its commitment to reducing burden on business and simplification to evaluate and grant the applications with priority.

▶▶ [See Joint industry statement on Article 11 of the Batteries regulation](#)

Fast-tracking permitting of data center projects

Data centre development across Europe is currently hampered by a patchwork of national permitting regimes under which a single development requires numerous permits subject to different procedural rules with different timelines depending on location and requiring interaction with various authorities. Even where permit requirements derive from EU legislation (such as the Industrial Emissions

¹⁴ Regulation (EU) 2023/1542 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 July 2023 concerning batteries and waste batteries.



Directive¹⁵ or the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive¹⁶) there is no consistent administrative procedure applied across Member States.

The EU's competitiveness and position as a hub for data centre development would be enhanced if the administrative procedures for permitting of new developments were simplified, standardised and streamlined. The Net Zero Industry Act¹⁷ demonstrates how these existing administrative processes can be streamlined and simplified via EU-wide regulation. We suggest adopting a harmonised approach to streamlined permitting for developments of data centres and other significant and strategic infrastructure projects.

We recommend **a dedicated, expedited permitting track for data center projects**, similar to what might exist for other critical infrastructure. This could involve:

- Certainty as to eligibility requirements for the streamlined permitting process and the types of projects that qualify.
- The co-ordination of all required permits as part of a single approval process.
- A centralised digital platform for management of the full permitting process.
- A single point of contact responsible for coordinating the process with all relevant authorities and communicating with the applicant.
- Clear timescales for the overall permitting process and key stage.
- Standardized application forms and requirements: Reduce the variability and complexity often seen at municipal levels.
- Enabling parallel (rather than sequential) review of zoning, building, and environmental permits.
- Shorter review deadlines: Introduce legally binding, ambitious deadlines for authorities to process data center permit applications, with clear consequences for delays.

We also recommend to clarify and simplify EIA implementation by:

- Providing EU-level guidance on Best Available Techniques.
- Avoiding duplication between EIA and Strategic Environmental Assessment¹⁸ processes.

Such expedited permitting track should also rely on the following actions :

¹⁵ Directive 2011/65/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 8 June 2011 on the restriction of the use of certain hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment

¹⁶ Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment

¹⁷ Regulation (EU) 2024/1735 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2024 on establishing a framework of measures for strengthening Europe's net-zero technology manufacturing ecosystem

¹⁸ Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment

- Improve access to developable land by encouraging Member States to identify and zone land with grid access and permitting readiness.
- Promote digitalisation of permitting procedures to improve transparency, reduce delays, and level the playing field across Member States.
- Ensure implementation of IED doesn't include gold plating/ fragmentation at Member States level.

▶▶ See DIGITALEUROPE's [Proposal for the draft EU sustainability rating scheme for data centres](#)

Simplifying the EU deforestation regulation (EUDR)¹⁹

DIGITALEUROPE strongly supports the environmental objectives of the EUDR and recognize its importance in addressing global deforestation. However, successful implementation requires regulatory clarity, proportionality, and practical feasibility across diverse value chains. We emphasize the need for simplification, legal certainty, and targeted obligations that avoid disproportionate burdens while safeguarding environmental integrity.

We believe that implementing the below measures would ensure effective deforestation control while supporting competitiveness, supply chain resilience, and Europe's circular economy goals as well as avoiding spillover deforestation effects across other jurisdictions:

- **Targeted due diligence:** Assign full responsibility only to the first importer/trader/producer placing products on the EU market. Introduce phased compliance with a stop-the-clock mechanism until rules are clarified.
- **Proportionate scope:**
 - Apply **de minimis thresholds for negligible quantities** (e.g., small components in electronics, packaging materials).
 - **Exempt spare parts, licence codes and information materials** (eg. manuals, leaflets, labels), **replacement packaging, and testing samples**. Particularly for packaging and information materials imported to Europe in its own right (ie. not physically accompanying a product), when this is proven to be a logistical necessity (ie. its exclusive purpose is to eventually carry, support, and/or product the economic operator's specific products, instead of a revenue-generating business activity), it should be exempted from EUDR obligations. If full exemption cannot be guaranteed, a de minimis threshold should be applied: (a) below 10% of the total amount of the economic operator's relevant commodity imports, or (b) below EUR 150 annual turnover from that activity
- **Legal clarity & enforcement:**
 - **Clearer product classification for mixed codes.**

¹⁹ Regulation (EU) 2023/1115 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 31 May 2023 on the making available on the Union market and the export from the Union of certain commodities and products associated with deforestation and forest degradation

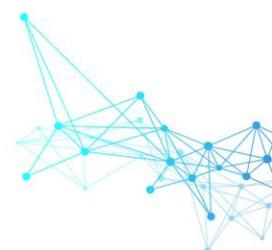
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- Recognize **international certification systems** (FSC, PEFC, RSPO, etc.). This would allow to reduce bureaucratic and/or excessive and overlapping rules for due diligence on products already certified about their recycled content or other required characteristic.
 - Establish a **standardized framework for information sharing**. This framework should include templates and methods for data exchange, ensuring all relevant information is shared in a consistent format. By creating a unified system, the EU can facilitate automation, reduce the administrative burden on businesses, and accelerate compliance across the supply chain. This will allow for more efficient data integration into existing workflows, making EUDR compliance more accessible and less resource-intensive for all companies.
 - **Use the first year as a learning period, focusing on guidance and audits rather than fines.** Auditing the processes companies have in place would reward early adopters who have invested in building robust, auditable systems. By focusing on the 'how'—ensuring companies have a clear system for due diligence—rather than the 'what' (100% accuracy from day one), the EU can support the transition without overburdening importers. This reduces the financial risk for companies and encourages a structured, long-term approach to compliance, ensuring the regulation's goals are met sustainably.

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About DIGITALEUROPE

DIGITALEUROPE is the leading trade association representing digitally transforming industries in Europe. We stand for a regulatory and investment environment that enables European digitalizing businesses across multiple sectors and citizens to prosper from digital technologies. We wish Europe to grow, attract and sustain the world's best digital talents, investment and technology companies. Together with our members, we shape the industry policy positions on all relevant policy matters and contribute to its development and implementation. Our membership represents over 45,000 businesses who operate and invest in Europe. It includes corporations and scale-ups which are global leaders in their field of activity, as well as national trade associations from across 30+ European countries.

