



Press Release

EUROPEAN POLICY BENEFITS NATIONAL DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT BUT EU LAGS CHINA AND U.S. ON DIGITAL INNOVATION

- **Vodafone Institute poll “Digitising Europe Pulse” across 10 EU member states finds citizens strongly believe EU membership benefits digital development.**
- **EU citizens positive about role of technology in solving major societal challenges, with climate change viewed as most pressing issue by far.**
- **Europe viewed as leading USA and China in consumer protection, but lagging on digital economy and Artificial Intelligence.**
- **European citizens say protecting personal data, cyber security and tackling hate speech and fake news should be EU policy priorities.**

More than two-thirds of Europeans (68%) believe that European policy and legislation is having a positive impact on their country’s digital development, a new survey of the Vodafone Institute, the European think-tank of the Vodafone Group, has revealed.

Citizens in Hungary and Poland (75%) were most convinced that membership of the EU is beneficial to national digital development, compared to people from the Czech Republic (55%) who were more sceptical of the EU’s impact.

The findings were published today as the first of a series of “Digitising Europe Pulse” quarterly surveys conducted by the market research firm Ipsos across 10 EU member states – Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain, Sweden and United Kingdom.

Inger Paus, Managing Director of the Vodafone Institute, said: “European citizens are very aware of the importance of digitisation for the future of Europe. They acknowledge that the EU has taken this on as a priority and is delivering results on digital policies. Accordingly, their expectations that the EU leverages digitisation to address some of the most pressing issues such as climate change are very high.”

Amongst all policy issues mitigating climate change is perceived as the most pressing issue in general (46%). Europeans are highly positive about the role of technology in building progressive societies, with technology regarded as key to solving a variety of societal challenges such as fighting diseases (87%), improving

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data security (86%), securing economic growth (84%) and financial stability (82%) as well as mitigating climate change (79%).

Awareness of digital policies amongst Europeans is also relatively high, including GDPR (84%), consumer protection policies (77%) and competition and data protection fines against global tech companies (58%). EU citizens are less aware of other policy initiatives such as the Digital Single Market (38%) or Digital Education Plan (28%). Given the importance of data protection for European consumers, the majority preferred to have a choice to pay either with money or through collection of personal data for online services (70%).

In comparison with the USA and China, Europeans do not perceive the EU to be playing a leading role in the age of digital transformation, with only 15% considering the EU to be a driver of digital innovation. Nevertheless, around half of Europeans believe that the EU is well positioned on consumer protection compared to the USA and China. But only around a third considered the EU is well positioned globally on the digital economy and Artificial Intelligence. Making the internet a safer place is a major concern for EU citizens, who consider that the EU's policy priorities should focus on protecting personal data (63%), reinforcing cyber security (56%) and tackling hate speech and fake news (51%).

Download “Digitising Europe Pulse: Views on the EU digital agenda” (PDF)

Vodafone Institute for Society and Communications

The Institute is Vodafone's think-tank. We explore the potential and responsible use of digital technologies for innovation, growth and sustainable social impact. Through research and events, we provide thought leadership and offer a platform for dialogue between business, academia and politics.

We are committed to improving access to technology for all parts of society, developing and supporting projects on the ground for female empowerment and digital education. The wide-ranging expertise of the Advisory Board members reflects the Institute's intention to act as a cross-sectoral platform.

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