



Press release

Several European organizations lay the bricks of the "European Digital Squads" in Tallinn

TALLINN, the 29th September 2017 – At the occasion of the Tallinn Digital Summit, five European organizations will gather to reflect about a joint initiative: the "European Digital Squads". The objectives of the project are first, to produce policy scenarios and solutions for the digital future of Europe and second, to improve the dialogue between European institutions and digital ecosystems. This will be fulfilled by catalyzing the working capacities and the visions of expert bodies from four different countries, in a short period of time. The cooperation is open to other organizations willing to join the initiative later on.

The Estonian Foresight Centre, the French Digital Council, the Internet Economy Foundation and the think-tank iRights.Lab from Germany have decided to gather at the occasion of the Tallinn Digital Summit, which will bring together EU heads of state or government on the 29th of September 2017. The National Board of Trade from Sweden will join for the event. Urve Palo, Estonian Minister of Entrepreneurship and Information Technology and Mounir Mahjoubi, French Minister for Digital Affairs will both welcome the initiative and will attend the kick-off.

The meeting's purpose is to reflect about means to involve digital actors from member states in the building of a common digital strategy. For Marie Ekeland, member of the French Digital Council, *"the European Commission has set an ambitious goal with the Digital Single Market, but we need to go beyond and think up the next move. This is only possible if you find short cuts between European institutions and local innovators, whose knowledge about the actual state of the art of technology and future opportunities for Europe is precious"*. For Clark Parsons, Managing Director of the Internet Economy Foundation, *"Europe's nations are building strong digital companies and economies, and each of our organizations is involved in helping to make that happen, often at the national level. But it is important that these ecosystems work together to foster a truly united European digital future. The European Digital Squads will help us speak with one voice about what needs to be done."*

The members of the Squads will work with local actors to imagine policy scenarios that will help law and decision-makers across Europe to address the main challenges of digitalization. For Meelis Kitsing, Head of Research at the Estonian Foresight Centre, *"Our objective is to evaluate opportunities and risks of the digital transformation for Europe in order to suggest positive development scenarios. We will join our forces and try to deliver first policy solutions by the end of this year."* Philipp Otto, Executive Director of iRights.Lab, explains: *"We want to enable the right preconditions for a successful Europe in the digital 21st century. To this end, we bring the expertise of our structures and think tanks together and help the European heads of state and government to build a digital Europe."*

The cooperation will produce first results at the end of this year. The Squads will try to address the challenges institutions face because of the unprecedented speed, variety and power of digital innovation in the platform economy. This first pilot will be followed by new projects and the cooperation will remain open to other independent organizations willing to join.

For Urve Palo, Estonian Minister of Entrepreneurship and Information Technology, *"We are happy to host the discussions that are close to our heart – creating a Digital Single Market is one of our presidency's priorities. Also, we wish to initiate a discussion on better use and movement of all types of data within the EU to unlock the full potential of data – the asset of the digital era"*.

Mounir Mahjoubi, French Minister for Digital Affairs, added that *"Europe needs these dynamic and forward-looking initiatives. If we want to face the incredible challenge and opportunity of the digital transformation and keep the pace of today's innovation, closeness with our ecosystems and inclusiveness are essential."*

The kick-off will take place before the opening of the heads of state and government summit at the Estonian Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications. A public debate will be held from 9:00 to 10:30 am.

Venue

Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications /Majandus- ja
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