

THE DIGITAL TRANSITION IN THE EU

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Abstract. *This study meticulously examines the multifaceted dimensions of the digital transition within the European Union, with a specific focus on the profound implications of the EU's Digital Compass initiative on the Republic of Moldova — a candidate country earnestly striving to harmonize with EU standards. Positioned within the conceptual framework of the European Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles, the paper elucidates fundamental themes, including human-centric digital transformation, digitalization, and democratic digital participation. Navigating this complex landscape, the analysis sheds light on key policy instruments, such as the Second Digital Agenda for Europe (2020-2030) and legislative frameworks exemplified by the Digital Services Act and Digital Markets Act, which collectively outline the ambitious 2030 targets of the EU. The core of Europe's digital vision revolves around data governance and digital identification, as evidenced by seminal initiatives like the European Data Governance Act and the EU Digital Identity framework. The exploration extends to the EU's proactive approach to digital information exchange, underscoring a commitment to collaborative and secure communication. Finally, this work reflects the EU's dedicated pursuit of a unified digital future, positioning both the EU and Moldova on a transformative trajectory toward a digitally empowered future.*

Keywords: *regulations, inclusive digitalization, cybersecurity threats, transparency, security.*

Introduction

Undoubtedly, the European Union, through its **Digital Compass initiative**, aims to establish a European declaration outlining digital rights and principles. This declaration is designed to articulate the rights of citizens in the digital realm and establish a set of principles that both the EU and its member states commit to following during the process of digital transformation. Given the **Republic of Moldova's Candidate Status** and its aspiration to align with the European Union, it becomes crucial for us to carefully consider the implications of digitalization regulations and EU liability rules. This is a significant step towards fostering alignment with European standards in our journey towards EU integration.

European Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles

The robust backing of the European Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles in December 2021 emphasizes its pivotal role in aligning fundamental rights across the digital and physical domains. The Digital Europe Programme, endowed with a EUR 7.5 billion budget (2021-2027), [1] strategically aligns with EU funds, manifesting a commitment to allocate at least 20% of recovery funds to transformative digitalization projects.

The guiding principles of the Declaration centre around six key themes:

- 1) **Human-Centric Digital Transformation:** Prioritizing individual rights in digital transformation, ensuring empowerment without compromising security or fundamental rights. Signatories pledge to advocate this approach domestically and internationally.
- 2) **Inclusive Digitalization:** Emphasizing equal technology access, especially for vulnerable groups, with concrete actions for comprehensive inclusivity.

- 3) **Informed Online Choices:** Advocating for informed choices online, transparency in algorithm use, and the ability to select online services based on objective information.
- 4) **Democratic Digital Participation:** Enhancing democratic engagement through reliable online environments, transparency in service ownership, and protection against disinformation.
- 5) **Secure Digital Environment:** Ensuring access to secure digital technologies and safeguarding against cyber threats for individuals, businesses, and public services.
- 6) **Sustainable Digital Future:** Promoting environmentally conscious practices for a sustainable digital landscape.

These succinctly articulated principles form the cornerstone of a comprehensive European approach to the digital future.

The Second Digital Agenda for Europe: 2020-2030

Building upon the ambitious second digital agenda for Europe (2020-2030), the EU unfurls a digital compass, articulating four strategic targets for 2030. These visionary goals span *digital skills, businesses, infrastructure, and public services*. The legislative pillars, the Digital Services Act (DSA) and Digital Markets Act (DMA), act as catalysts, reshaping EU digital service regulations to champion fair business competition and user rights [2].

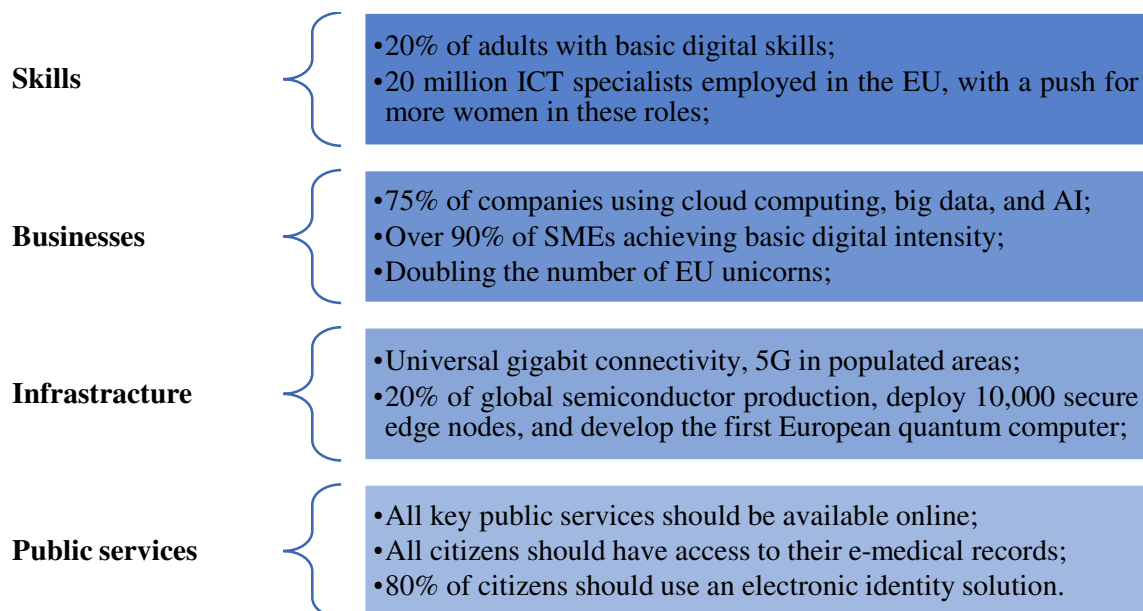


Figure 1 – Second Digital Agenda for Europe’s targets for 2030 [3]

Data Governance and Digital Identification

At the heart of Europe's digital vision lies data sharing, meticulously balanced through initiatives like the European Data Governance Act and the proposed data act. The EU underscores the imperative of balancing data-driven innovation with considerations of privacy, security, and ethics. The European digital identification (eID) framework unfolds as a beacon, empowering individuals with mastery over their online identity and data.

With the **EU Digital Identity Wallets**, citizens will be able to prove, across the EU, their identity where necessary to access services online, to share digital documents, or simply to prove a specific personal attribute, such as age, without revealing their full identity or other personal details. Citizens will always have full control of the data they share and by whom.

The EU Digital Identity can be used for any number of cases, for example:

- Public services such as requesting birth certificates, medical certificates, reporting a change of address;
- Opening a bank account;

- Filing tax returns;
- Applying for a university, at home or in another member state;
- Storing a medical prescription that can be used anywhere in Europe;
- Proving your age;
- Renting a car using a digital driving license;
- Checking in to a hotel.

The following identification and trust services can already be used with legal effect across the EU thanks to the trust framework created by the eIDAS Regulation. They are key tools to enable trust and security in the Digital Single Market [4]. Some services, like eSignatures, will be integrated into the wallet to facilitate their use.

Table 1 - Electronic Identity and Authentication Solutions created by eIDAS Regulation

Name	Definition	Citizens	Businesses
<i>eSignature</i>	Expression in an electronic format of a person's agreement to the content of a document. The function will be integrated into the wallet.	Enables the signing of legal documents and sending emails without the need for paper printing.	Will reduce costs and time through streamlined processes and help innovate business procedures.
<i>eTimestamp</i>	Electronic proof that a set of data existed at a specific time.	Provides evidence of concert ticket purchase.	Will enhance document tracking and achieve greater accountability.
<i>eID</i>	A way for businesses and consumers to prove their identity electronically.	Facilitates the opening of a foreign bank account using a national ID.	Will expand my customer base, save costs and time, and build trust in cross-border transactions.
<i>eSeal</i>	Guarantee both the origin and the integrity of a document.	Ensures the authenticity of football tickets, verifying that they are genuine and not counterfeit.	Will reduce costs and time through streamlined processes and promote trust in the origin of the document.
<i>Qualified Web Authentication Certificate</i>	Ensure websites are trustworthy and reliable.	Offers assurance regarding the trustworthiness and safety of the websites and apps utilized.	Will increase consumer trust and help avoid phishing, protecting the reputation of my business.

Digital Information Exchange

The EU's proactive stance is evident in the proposed legislation in December 2021 to bolster digital information exchange in terrorism cases. These groundbreaking rules mandate member states to share information promptly, spawning a modern, digital case-management system that empowers Eurojust to forge vital links. The Council's formal adoption of the new legislation on 18 September 2023 heralds a new era of collaborative and secure digital communication.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the European Union's comprehensive digital strategy, highlighted by initiatives like the European declaration on digital rights, the second digital agenda for 2020-2030, and legislative frameworks such as the Digital Services Act and Digital Markets Act, signifies a dedicated effort towards a unified and secure digital future. Moldova, as a candidate country, must carefully consider digitalization regulations and EU liability rules for successful integration. The Digital Europe Programme, European digital identification, and advancements in the digitalization of justice further showcase the EU's commitment to fostering innovation, inclusivity, and security

in the digital landscape. These collective efforts position both the EU and Moldova on a transformative path towards a digitally empowered and integrated future.

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