

Presidency Summary of the Informal Videoconference of Ministers of Telecommunications

Brussels, 6 June 2020

Executive summary

The EU Telecom Ministers gathered for the second time and held a policy debate on the EU's digital priorities in the post COVID-19 era.

EU Ministers were invited to reflect on what are the main lessons learnt from the COVID-19 crisis in the digital sector and the priority aspects of the digital strategy as well as how to ensure the EU's competitiveness and digital sovereignty on a global scale and how to prioritize and increase investments in connectivity, data and digital technologies, such as artificial intelligence.

Ministers emphasized that the digital infrastructure has proven to be resilient and robust during the COVID 19 crisis. Nevertheless, the ministers agreed that further investments in the digital infrastructure are necessary in order to overcome a digital gap that still exists, and which may restrict to access of citizens to e-Health, e- learning and to distant working.

They also highlighted the importance of strengthening EU digital sovereignty and cooperation as well as creation of synergy through EU programs such as Connecting Europe Facility and Digital Europe Program.

The importance of the development of digital skills, of the development of data economy, the importance of Artificial Intelligence and the cybersecurity were pointed out. In addition, the role of the digital in reaching Green Deal goals has been underlined.

Finally, it was stressed that future legal acts needs a careful analyses and balanced solutions.

Under Any other business, the Croatian presidency briefed ministers on the state of play of current legislative files. The work carried out on the e-Privacy proposal under the Croatian presidency is summed up in a progress report that the presidency presented to the Permanent Representatives Committee (COREPER) on 3 June 2020.

For the proposed regulation establishing the European Cybersecurity Competence Centre and the Network of Coordination Centres, on 3 June COREPER agreed on the revised mandate for negotiations with the European Parliament.

The presidency also briefed ministers on the latest developments on current non-legislative activities. On 3 June, COREPER confirmed full agreement on draft Council conclusions on shaping Europe's digital future and decided to use a written procedure for their adoption by the Council. This written procedure will be launched shortly after the video conference.

The presidency also presented the state of play of the implementation of the EU toolbox on security of 5G networks.

The Commission provided an update on the development of contact tracing and warning apps in the context of COVID-19 emphasising that work continues on technical specifications for the interoperability of applications.

The incoming German presidency presented its work programme in the area of digital, telecommunications and cyber for the second half of 2020.