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NOTE

From:	The Spanish delegation
To:	Council
Subject:	Work programme of the incoming Presidency - Information from the Spanish delegation

On 1 July 2023, Spain will take over the rotating Presidency of the Council of the European Union from Sweden.

Artificial Intelligence will be one of the main objectives of the Spanish Presidency. Generative AI has become mainstream and made all the news headlines, creating worldwide awareness thanks to the benefits it can bring to the efficiency of businesses, but also the risks that it poses over security, disinformation or the respect of people's rights. In this regard, Spain will make its best effort in the negotiations on the Regulation on AI with the European Parliament, ensuring that it does not undermine innovation but at the same time protects fundamental rights of individuals. At the same time and as part of our commitment to AI, we will ensure that the Spanish Sandbox on AI delivers the first preliminary results. The developments in the field of AI will be presented at the next Assembly of the AI Alliance to be held on the 16 and 17 November in Madrid.

The Spanish Presidency will also give priority to strengthening European cyber resilience. In this sense, it will be our task to ensure a general approach is reached on the Regulation on cybersecurity requirements for products with digital elements at the Council of the EU so that we can start negotiations with the European Parliament. We will work closely with Member States to reach a general approach on the Regulation on the Cyber Solidarity Act and on the revision of the Cybersecurity Act.

The Spanish Presidency will also aim to conclude negotiations on the Interoperable Europe Act.

As the Spanish Presidency will be the last one before the European Parliament elections, which will take place during the Belgian Presidency, we will put the focus on several political objectives that will help the European Union accelerate its human-centric and rights-oriented digital transformation and its global competitiveness.

Building on the European Declaration of Digital Rights and Principles, signed on the 15 December 2022, Spain intends to further reflect on the importance of developing ethical and inclusive digitalization.

In order to achieve the 2030 Digital Decade objective of doubling the number of unicorns in the EU, Spain intends to further discuss the conditions of excellence for the creation and growth of tech and deep tech start-ups in the European Union, with the help of the Europe Start-up Nation Alliance. The efforts will focus on proposing a coordinated and harmonised approach at EU level on tech entrepreneurship, avoiding internal competition and positioning the EU as a reference hub for attracting start-ups, talent and investment.

Another objective of the Spanish presidency will be to promote the digital transformation of the Union so that it is equipped with the necessary capacities to comply with the ambitious objectives of the strategic program of the Digital Decade 2030. Now is the key moment to carry out a serious reflection on a new regulatory policy for electronic communications in Europe. This policy should promote the strategic nature of this sector, maintain its dynamism, its strong competitive character and innovation, while at the same time ensuring technical and financial sustainability as well as the fulfilment of the objectives of the Digital Decade.

Spain also acknowledges and thanks for the effort made by Sweden on the ongoing negotiations on the Gigabit Infrastructure Act and commits to bringing the negotiations on this proposal as far as possible.

Spain considers Latin American and Caribbean countries as necessary and strategic geopolitical partners in the world. This region is the closest to the European Unión in terms of principles and values out of all the Global South, taking into account that many of the countries are full members or accessing members at the OECD. The Spanish Presidency will intend to build bridges between the two regions starting with the implementation of the EU-CELAC Digital Alliance, encouraging digital partnerships with key LAC countries as well as advancing the support of their human-centric and rights-oriented digital transformation through bilateral investment packages.

The main digital event of the Spanish Presidency, apart from the events previously mentioned, will be an Informal Telecommunication Ministers Meeting on the 23 and 24 of October in León, the cybersecurity city of Spain. The meeting will bring together ministers and key experts to share their insights on telecommunications, cybersecurity, AI, quantum technologies and the virtual worlds.
