



European associations call to G7 leaders: the time to act on international data flows is now

Over more than a year of lockdowns, closed borders, and remote working, the enabling power of digital technologies has never been clearer. To build back better, and greener, it is clear that the digital transformation must be at the core of our recovery efforts.

To get there, G7 leaders need to look at every aspect of the digital ecosystem, from investment in infrastructure and technological development, to updating regulatory frameworks and boosting the uptake of international standards. However, **our global digital recovery will be fuelled above all by data**, and the world's digital ecosystems can flourish only when this data is allowed to flow freely across borders.

The **growth potential of free flowing data can benefit everyone**, at all stages of development, by providing access to markets, to collaboration opportunities, and to technological solutions to global challenges in areas as broad as climate, healthcare, and finance. **Data's enabling power extends far beyond ICT**, and has enormous implications for industrial sectors such as manufacturing, transport, energy, and agriculture.

On the one hand, **we must ensure safe and secure data flows while maintaining high standards on personal data protection and privacy**. On the other, **regulatory autonomy must not be misused to impose localisation requirements which unjustifiably restrict data flows**. The ongoing negotiations on the Joint Statement Initiative (JSI) on eCommerce at the WTO offer a golden opportunity find a workable solution with a broad range of partners. A truly global agreement on data flows should be our end goal.

This is a critical moment to take action. G7 leaders should work together to ensure that this unique opportunity is not wasted. As representatives of Europe's digital and technology sectors, **we therefore call upon the G7 to make cross-border data flows a top priority for this year's summit.**

We therefore recommend:

- **Cross-border data flows should be a part of the high-level principles on digital trade**, as initiated by G7 trade ministers.
- G7 members' (and invitees') should aim to **bring their positions into alignment in view of the current eCommerce discussions at WTO level**
- **G7 invitees who are not currently signatories these WTO should also take part**, with a longer term view to promoting the free flow of data to all WTO members.

We look forward to engaging with our partners here in Europe and beyond, and to contributing to developing solutions that ensure that the power of the digital transformation is translated into global growth for the benefit of all.

Signed,

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