

## European telcos welcome Joint EU Member States Declaration on Cloud

Brussels, 15 October 2020 – ETNO, the association representing Europe’s leading telecom operators, welcomes today’s Joint Member States Declaration on Cloud. This is an important milestone towards a stronger European commitment for deploying next generation cloud infrastructure and services.

As European telecom companies accelerate deployment of 5G and step up efforts on the industrial internet, it is clear that Europe can be competitive in generating industrial [data](#), for example in key areas such as IoT and mechanical engineering. According to 2020 data, we expect the number of IoT connections in Europe to rise from 210 million today to up to 740 million in 2021.

### Building a European cloud federation

Today, data storage, use and analytics is mainly demanded to non-EU players, based on a cloud infrastructure dominated by only a few companies from the United States and Asia. Stronger competition that creates alternative offerings is therefore the key to improving European investment in tech, the competitiveness of our industrial sectors as well as the advancement of EU values in privacy and security.

In this context, we believe that both the European Commission Data Strategy and plans by Member States are showing an ambitious, yet realistic plan. While creating an alternative cloud ecosystem from scratch would be technically and commercially unfeasible at this stage, we fully support the EU’s vision of building a pan-European cloud “federation” of interconnected cloud capabilities.

European telecom companies fully subscribe to the objective: we must build an open, trustworthy and value-based infrastructure ecosystem in the EU, which facilitates the sharing of data among businesses and public sector while guaranteeing data sovereignty in compliance with European values.

### Investing in infrastructure for a resilient European cloud

In the context of Europe’s increased cloud ambitions, investment in infrastructure becomes even more essential. A resilient, efficient digital infrastructure is the necessary backbone of any trusted data sharing architecture. Cloud infrastructure will need widespread 5G and fibre networks that support data processing closer to the user, including edge computing.

European telcos are fully committed to accelerate 5G deployment, which still encounters many obstacles, both administrative and in terms of investment climate.

At the same time – and on top of network investment – European telecom companies have a key role in investing and operating edge computing capabilities over their networks. This will offer a major alternative to the centralised cloud computing model operated by Big Tech.

For the above-mentioned reasons, we welcome today’s announcement of a coordinated investment plan. Coordination at EU level among industry players, Member States, European Commission and – especially – coherent use of EU funding leverages, will be the key to success in deploying next generation cloud infrastructure. A clear engagement from the public sector to generate initial demand would give further boost to the plan.

Lise Fuhr, ETNO Director General, said: *“The Joint Declaration sets the right course of action to stimulate European cloud supply. To make this project a success, EU governments and the public sector need to be fully committed to the initiative by fully shifting to cloud services. We call for EU targets and commitments that reflect the demand side of the cloud investment story”*.