



## Joint press statement from the CEOs of Orange and Deutsche Telekom

18 November 2025

### **Telecom Operators: Strategic Drivers for European Sovereignty, Resilience, and Competitiveness**

Digital sovereignty has become a top EU strategic priority. It means collectively protecting our strategic European interests while remaining open to stay globally competitive and innovative. We strongly support this goal and are committed to actively contribute to its realisation.

A Sovereign Digital Union should rest on four fundamental building blocks:

- Control; Ensuring our digital infrastructure is resilient and secure;
- Choice; Promoting EU alternatives and interoperable ecosystems where critical dependencies exist and technological capacity is strategically relevant;
- Competency; Developing the skills and know-how necessary for advancing an EU digital ecosystem;
- Critical size; Achieving scale in the digital sector, which is a prerequisite for economic growth, competitiveness, and investment in innovation and technological capacities.

To materialise, massive investments, bold political decisions, and active engagement of all stakeholders – public and private alike – will be required.

Developing a more sovereign digital EU is multifaceted. First, European citizens, businesses and administrations cannot benefit from a competitive and sovereign EU without robust, widespread, secure, and resilient connectivity networks. This requires an improved financial environment through an investment-friendly regulatory framework. Therefore, we call for a fundamental overhaul of today's framework for telecoms. A bold Digital Networks Act should modernise, simplify and better harmonise rules in line with the recommendations of Draghi's Competitiveness Report.

Second, in the area of cloud, it is essential for the EU to define common sovereignty criteria through legislation, together with a clear commitment to promote the use of European cloud services in public procurement. This will enable the necessary scale for a more competitive and resilient European cloud ecosystem. To this end, along with 10 other European companies, we have established a European Sovereign Tech Industry Alliance (ESTIA) to promote EU digital sovereignty and advocate for a stronger focus on European digital solutions, especially in the area of cloud.

Third, the EU must become a true AI Continent and not a mere consumer of AI tools developed outside its borders. As telecom operators, we build networks able to support AI-driven traffic and to leverage AI internally to develop more efficient, smart and agile networks and services. And we help building the capacity needed for a sovereign European AI ecosystem. Similar to our role in providing access to connectivity, we have a role to play in enabling access to AI tools for consumers as well as tailor-made and specialised computing resources for European industry, academia, and the public sector to bring AI into application.

As leading European telecom operators, we are committed to strengthening Europe's digital sovereignty and enhancing its global competitiveness. We are building the digital infrastructure and technology that Europe needs, from connectivity to cloud, AI, and cybersecurity. We call on European policymakers to support the telecoms sector with ambitious and effective reforms.

**Christel Heydemann, CEO Orange**  
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