



Masters of Digital 2026

25 & 26 FEBRUARY 2026 | BRUSSELS & ONLINE

Event Report



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Welcome Remarks

Masters of Digital 2026 was kicked off with remarks from **Cecilia Bonefeld-Dahl, Director-General of DIGITALEUROPE**, who set the stage by highlighting the growing link between Europe's security and its digital transformation. She stressed that Europe's geopolitical resilience, particularly in light of the war in Ukraine, increasingly depends on technological capabilities and a strong digital backbone for defence.

She emphasised the need to strike the right balance in regulation, warning that Europe risks overburdening businesses that are trying to scale globally. Addressing this challenge will be a key theme during Masters of Digital. While companies can scale to a trillion euro valuation in the US, that number remains zero in the EU. A significant number of companies continue to relocate outside Europe to grow and attract investment. This must change, and Europe needs to remain laser focused.

Europe's digital defence reset must focus on three priorities:

1. Boost dual-use and digital defence capabilities

Modern defence depends on software, AI, satellites, drones, and critical infrastructure protection. The EU's ability to invest in dual-use technologies is a game-changing shift.

2. Scale investment through common procurement

Bigger defence budgets are not enough on their own. Funding must translate into real capabilities, supported by DIGITALEUROPE call for 25% in digital defence spending, backed by common EU procurement and faster six-month joint procurement timelines.

3. Cut regulatory burden

Europe must slash unnecessary red tape so companies can grow, innovate and compete. Industry momentum for simplification is also reflected in the AI & Tech Declaration.



"Europe is taking the reins to Scale, Lead, Succeed."



Speakers

Maria Luis Albuquerque Commissioner for Financial Services and the Savings and Investments Union	Jeffrey Apeldoorn VP Missions, ICEYE	Peter Arlett Head of the Data Analytics and Methods Taskforce, European Medicines Agency (EMA)	Henrik Bliddal Head of National Security and Defense, Geopolitical & Government Relations, Nokia	Cecilia Bonefeld-Dahl Director General, DIGITALEUROPE	Hendrik Bourgeois SVP Government Affairs, Mastercard	Nadia Calviño President, European Investment Bank Group	Jeff Campbell SVP and Chief Government Strategy Officer, Cisco

Mauro Macchi CEO for Europe, Middle East, and Africa (EMEA) at Accenture	Bartek Madej Head of Digital and Commercial IT European Markets and Digital Health, Lead International Markets, BMS	Marco Marsella Acting Deputy Director General for Health and Director for "Digital, EU4Health and Health Systems Modernisation" at the European Commission's	Eva Maydell EPP, Bulgaria, Member of the ITRE Committee and EPP Group Lead on the Artificial Intelligence Act	Victor Negrescu (S&D, Romania), Vice-President of the European Parliament and Rapporteur for the 2025 Union Budget in the BUDG Committee	Renate Nikolay Deputy Director-General for Communication Networks, Content and Technology, DG CONNECT	Liisa-Ly Pakosta Minister of Justice and Digital Affairs, Estonia	Alexandros Paterakis Deputy CEO - Executive Board Member of Digital & Advanced Services, PPC Group

Vsevolod Chentsov Head of mission of Ukraine to the European Union	Séan Clancy Chair, EU Military Committee	Merete Clausen Deputy Chief Executive, European Investment Fund (EIF)	Raimonds Cudars Minister for Smart Administration and Regional Development, Latvia	Valdis Dombrovskis Commissioner for Economy and Productivity, Implementation and Simplification	Alberto di Felice Policy and Legal Counsel, DIGITALEUROPE	Jean Charles Ellermann-Kingombe Assistant Secretary General for Cyber and	Sabine Erlinghagen CEO of Grid Software, Siemens

Ray Pinto Senior Director for Vertical Strategy and Business Development, DIGITALEUROPE	André Rogaczewski CEO, Netcompany	Jaime Sanpera CEO and Co-Founder, Sateliot	Audrey Scozzaro Ferrazzini Vice-President Government Affairs, Qualcomm	Kristina Sinemus Minister for Digitalisation and Innovation, Hessen	Despina Spanou Deputy Director-General, DG CNECT, European Commission	Peter Stuckmann Head of Unit, Electronic Communications Policy, Implementation and	MEP Bruno Tobback (S&D, Belgium), Member of the ITRE Committee

Annick Faes VP IT and CIO Medical Devices EMEA, Johnson & Johnson	Mykhailo Fedorov Minister of Defence, Ukraine	Una Fitzpatrick Director, Technology Ireland	Niamh Gallagher Country Lead, AWS Ireland and EMEA Director, Infrastructure Public Policy	Valérian Giesz Co-Founder & COO, Quandela	Pieter Haec Senior Technology Reporter, POLITICO Europe	Karel Havlíček Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Industry and Trade, Czech Republic	Minna Helle CEO, Technology Industries of Finland (TIF)

Mirjam Storim Head of Strategy & Technology Relations, Siemens	Pasi Toivanen SVP, Strategic Government & Industry Initiatives, Geopolitical & Government Relations, Nokia	Karianne Tung Minister for Digitalization and Public Governance, Norway	Ilkka Varjos CTO, Canalu	LtGen Michael Vetter Director-General for Innovation and Cyber and Chief Information Officer, Federal Ministry of Defence in Berlin	MEP Pilar del Castillo Vera (EPP, Spain), Member of the ITRE Committee	Roberto Viola Director General, DG CNECT, European Commission	Henna Virkkunen Executive Vice-President for Technological Sovereignty, Security, and Democracy

Claudia Herben Vice President and Global Head of Technology, MedTech Surgery and MedTech Digital Surgery, Johnson & Johnson	Dan Hermansen CEO, Netcompany	Valeriya Ionan Advisor to the Minister of Defense of Ukraine, Advisor to the Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine on a voluntary, non-executive basis, Ex WarTime Deputy Minister, MDT Ukraine 2019-2025	Dan Jørgensen Commissioner for Energy and Housing	Robert Jozic Vice President Digital Strategy, Schwarz Group	Juhan Lepasaar Executive Director, ENISA	Nanna-Louise Linde Vice President of European Government Affairs, Microsoft	Peter Lodahl COO, Sparrow Quantum

Peter Weckesser President, DIGITALEUROPE and Chief Digital Officer, Schneider Electric	Viktoriia Yaremchuk Co-Founder & CEO, Foresight Vision	Tom Wehmeier Partner, Head of Intelligence, Atomico	Afşin Yurdakul Event Master of Ceremonies

OPENING MESSAGE

Mykhailo Fedorov

Master of Digital Award

The Master of Digital Award first introduced in 2021, recognises individuals who have been trailblazers in digital transformation.

This year, **Mykhailo Fedorov, Minister of Defence of Ukraine and former Minister of Digital Transformation**, received the award for his leadership in driving Ukraine's rapid digital transformation and for using technology to strengthen the country's resilience and defence capabilities. Ukraine has risen from 102nd to 5th globally in providing digital public services. Its DIIA app is used by 23 million Ukrainians and was listed by TIME Magazine as the top 200 inventions. Ukraine was the first country in the world to develop digital passports.

On the defence side, Ukraine is building a system to stop the enemy in the skies, halt its advance on the ground, and strengthen asymmetric

cyber operations against Russia's military and economic capabilities, increasing costs that Russia cannot sustain.

The award was received on his behalf by **Vsevolod Chentsov the Ambassador of Ukraine to the EU**. In a video message, Fedorov underlined how Ukraine has rapidly digitalised public services and demonstrated how agility, software integration and strong digital infrastructure have enabled the country to deploy technological solutions quickly and strengthen its defence capabilities.

He concluded by thanking the DIGITALEUROPE community for its support and expressed special appreciation to Cecilia Bonefeld-Dahl for her leadership.



KEYNOTE

General Seán Clancy

The opening keynote highlighted that digital capability has become a core component of modern defence, no longer a complementary element. Today's security environment is increasingly defined by data, connectivity and the need for decision-making at speed. Technologies such as drones demonstrate how the tactical landscape has shifted, with civilian and military innovation increasingly interconnected.

Using Ukraine as an example, the keynote stressed that operational agility and rapid technological integration are decisive. Ukraine's experience shows that innovation can be deployed quickly when systems, software and infrastructure are aligned, even under extreme pressure.

The keynote concluded that Europe's central challenge is integrating innovation at speed and scale. Slow procurement processes and fragmented implementation continue to hold Europe back, while global competitors invest heavily in emerging technologies. Ultimately, Europe's resilience will depend not only on the technologies it develops, but on how effectively it can integrate them into coordinated action.

"The central question remains: can we translate digital innovation into executable resilience? Because of the evolving security environment, resilience will not be measured by what technologies we possess but by how effectively we integrate them into our collective action."





PANEL DISCUSSION

Europe's AI Future: Simplify or Die?

This high-level panel stressed that theoretically perfect regulations are ineffective without a solid execution plan. **To keep Europe globally competitive, speakers argued that “competitiveness” must transform from a political idea into an industrial mandate, streamlining institutions and closing the capital gap before the global window of opportunity shuts.**

This session explored the crucial link between AI regulation, infrastructure investment, and technological sovereignty, emphasising that Europe's competitiveness depends on shifting from complex regulatory theories to tangible industrial implementation. Speakers warned that current regulatory messaging creates market uncertainty, potentially pushing innovation outside Europe. To address this, the panel called for multifunctional “AI Gigafactories” and a fundamental overhaul of public institutions, inspired by agile, delivery-oriented models like the Ukrainian Ministry of Defence.

Proposals like a “28th regime” were highlighted as a way to simplify operations across borders by creating a single European interface. The panel further argued that Europe's sovereignty will depend on scaling its own unicorns in strategic sectors such as quantum computing and battery technology. By bridging the scale-up capital gap through tools like the European Scale-Up Fund, Europe can move beyond adoption toward global leadership. **Ultimately, the EU must redefine its strategic end-state and transform “competitiveness” into a concrete, measurable policy priority that enables European technologies to lead global value chains.**

Key Takeaways:

Jeff Campbell, SVP & Chief Government Strategy Officer, Cisco

“What we want is a regulatory regime that protects the public but also promotes the industry and provides economic growth and security to the EU as a whole.”

MEP Eva Maydell, EPP, Bulgaria, Member of the ITRE Committee and EPP Group Lead on the Artificial Intelligence Act

“We need Institutions that can learn, that can move and that can deliver. This cannot be done with the tools we have been using in the last 10 – 15 years here in this capital of European institutions.”

Valérian Giesz, Co-Founder & COO, Quandela

“Quantum computing is a domain where Europe can take leadership but we need to coordinate efforts and scale fast enough with an immediate concrete action plan.”

Moderated by: Afşin Yurdakul, Event Master of Ceremonies





PANEL DISCUSSION

Building a Digital Powerhouse: European AI & Tech Declaration

This session showcased a new era of European industrial mobilisation, highlighting AI Gigafactories as a breakthrough in unified EU procurement. **Leaders emphasised that by integrating sovereign technology building blocks, from high-performance computing to modernised energy grids, Europe is finally moving from “strategic concepts” to industrial-scale execution.**

The dialogue focused on moving from regulation to R&D investment, embracing “technological dualism” and prioritising practical use cases over theoretical frameworks. Lessons from NATO’s work in Ukraine underscored that speed has become a strategic necessity. Industry experts argued that European ecosystems must prioritise collective value, building “digital highways” such as the European Digital Identity Wallet to ensure cross-border scalability.

Given AI’s rising energy demands, panellists stressed that Europe must leverage its global leadership in power-grid technology to build the infrastructure required for competitive AI deployment. This momentum culminated in a landmark moment for the continent’s digital future. DIGITALEUROPE’s AI and Tech Declaration calls for urgent market unification and a closing the investment gap to secure Europe’s technological sovereignty. It emphasises that decisive action in the next three years is critical to scaling innovation and retaining “unicorn” companies within the continent. **This milestone was marked by 17 CEOs joining Henna Virkkunen, Executive Vice-President for Technological Sovereignty, Security, and Democracy on stage, a powerful moment signalling a collective commitment to lead Europe’s digital and industrial future.**



Key Takeaways:

Roberto Viola, Director General, DG CNECT, European Commission

“Now it is our time to get organised at European level and reach critical mass on tech, because we have everything it takes.”

Jean Charles Ellermann-Kingombe, Assistant Secretary General for Cyber and Digital Transformation, NATO

“NATO is working to accelerate accreditation, acquisition, and cooperation with industry, which requires a different mindset focused on speed, practical deployment, and real-world use cases”

André Rogaczewski, CEO, Netcompany

“Agentic AI is taking over, we currently only see the tip of the iceberg. So much embedded AI to be implemented to make Europe efficient and optimized.”

Minna Helle, CEO, Technology Industries of Finland (TIF)

“We should start thinking together as Europeans. If we want to build European excellence, we have to learn to work together.”

Pasi Toivanen, SVP Strategic Government & Industry Initiatives, Geopolitical & Government Relations, Nokia

“We should rethink what an “ecosystem” actually means - bringing all actors together to solve the hardest issues”

Moderated by: Peter Weckesser, Chief Digital Officer, Schneider Electric and President, DIGITALEUROPE and **Cecilia Bonfeld-Dahl**, Director General, DIGITALEUROPE



KEYNOTE

Valdis Dombrovskis

THE STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE OF THE DIGITAL EURO

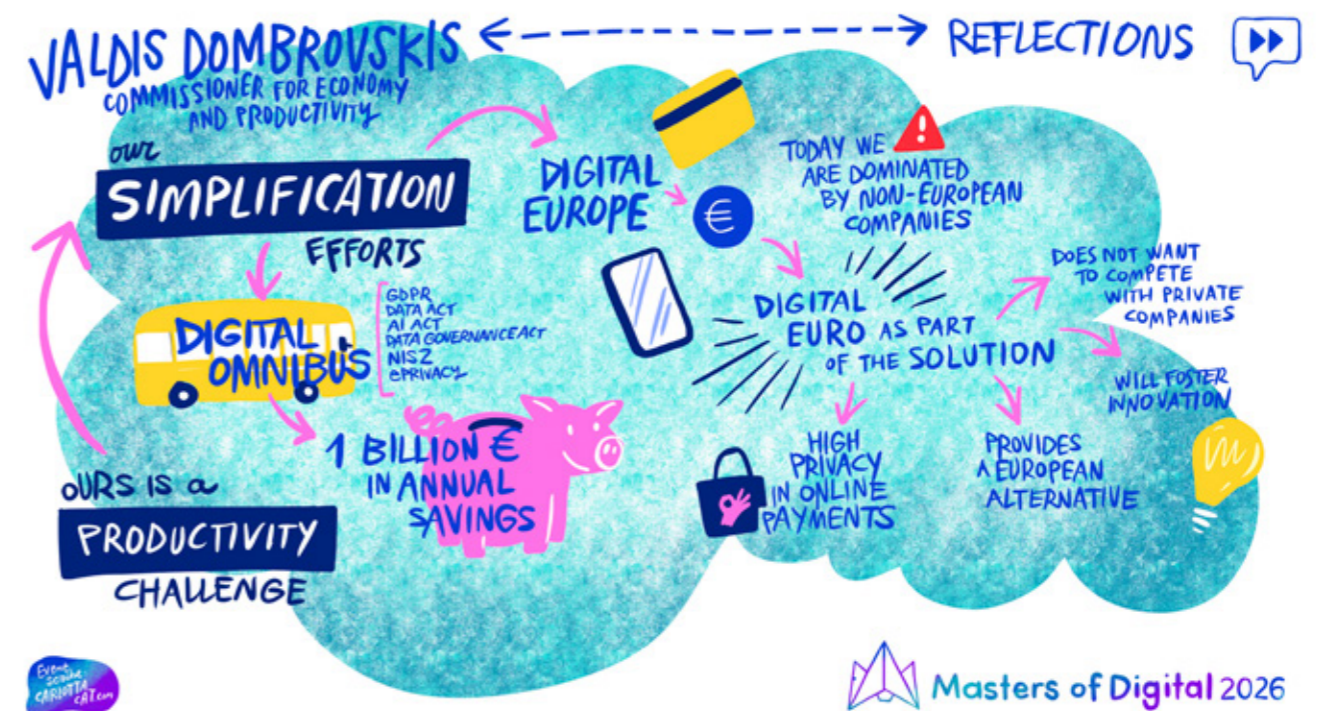
Valdis Dombrovskis Commissioner for Economy and Productivity, Implementation and Simplification highlighted the critical role of the digital euro in addressing Europe’s financial vulnerabilities, due to its overreliance on non-EU payment service providers for everyday digital transactions. He argued that a digital euro would strengthen Europe’s economic sovereignty and resilience, complementing both cash and existing private-sector solutions.

Dombrovskis emphasised that the digital euro would enhance privacy protections, increase competition, and drive innovation in the retail payments market. He underlined the importance of providing both online and offline functionality from the outset to ensure widespread adoption. He also stressed that the digital euro is not intended to replace cash but to modernise Europe’s payment infrastructure and reduce strategic dependencies.



Valdis Dombrovskis,
 Commissioner for Economy and Productivity, Implementation and Simplification

“Europe cannot afford to miss out on the opportunities represented by the next stage of digitalization. The Digital Euro is an important part of this puzzle. Making it a reality would send the clearest signal: Europe is ready to claim its place in the digital age”



PANEL DISCUSSION

World of Disorder: Boosting Europe's Digital Capacities

This session emphasised that closing the productivity gap requires a unified strategy to reduce market fragmentation and simplify regulation. Governments must act as agile partners to industry, using joint public procurement to boost demand and taking calculated risks alongside businesses.

The discussion centred on Europe's dual challenge: building a robust digital technology stack while simultaneously accelerating adoption across industrial sectors. Speakers stressed that AI is not a "plug and play" solution; its impact depends on transforming organisational models,

integrating human capabilities, and aligning incentives. Europe must prioritise its existing strengths, including advanced manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, and aerospace, ensuring the next EU budget embeds digitalisation across all policies. **By leveraging Europe's strong engineering base, reducing regulatory complexity, and moving from a culture of control to one of collaborative investment, the EU can finally scale home grown innovation.** The message was clear: success requires focus, execution, and bold funding choices.

Key Takeaways:

- Mauro Macchi**, CEO for Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA), Accenture
"AI is not plug-and-play: there is no magic without implementation and execution."
 - MEP Victor Negrescu**, (S&D, Romania), Vice-President of the European Parliament and Rapporteur for the 2025 Union Budget in the BUDG Committee
"Implementation and moving faster are the key directions when it comes to the EU budget."
 - Liisa-Ly Pakosta**, Minister of Justice and Digital Affairs, Estonia
"This is the only path we know in turbulent times, to work together with companies and take risks together."
 - Raimonds Čudars**, Minister for Smart Administration and Regional Development, Latvia
"We need a unified digital single market to boost competitiveness."
 - Mirjam Storim**, Head of Strategy & Technology Relations, Siemens
"Strategic prioritisation in research and innovation is necessary to focus resources effectively. R&I cannot be done by just doing research, we also need to consider the 'innovation' point of view."
- Moderated by: **Afşin Yurdakul**, Event Master of Ceremonies





KEYNOTE

A Spotlight on Europe's Digital Champions

Robert Jozić Vice President Digital Strategy, Schwarz Group presented a comprehensive strategy focused on strengthening Europe's independent digital infrastructure. He highlighted the Schwarz Group's significant investments, including the building of one of Europe's largest data centres and the goal to establish an AI Gigafactory to secure the entire value chain, from chips to foundational models.

Jozić emphasised that sovereignty is not about isolation but about freedom of choice, the ability to steer a business independently and when necessary, "leave the negotiation table". He stressed that Europe's digital ecosystem remains too fragmented and called for coordinated efforts, stronger collaboration with startups and decisive investment in future-shaping infrastructure. Rejecting narratives of decline, he urged European leaders to look beyond theoretical challenges and invest in the entrepreneurs and technologies that will define the continent's digital future.

Robert Jozić, Vice President Digital Strategy, Schwarz Group

"We have to accept the fact that we are still very fragmented in the way we operate and this has to change."

KEYNOTE

Henna Virkkunen

Henna Virkkunen Executive Vice-President for Technological Sovereignty, Security, and Democracy opened the session by emphasising the urgent need to connect Europe's technological ecosystem with policymakers and investors. She highlighted that Europe already has all the essential ingredients for global competitiveness: a strong industrial base, world-class research institutions, and over 50,000 startups - including 8,000 focused specifically on AI.

To address scaling challenges, Virkkunen stressed the importance of mobilising Europe's household savings for innovation. A central objective is to unlock the full potential of the Single Market through a 28th regime, designed to make Europe "the easiest place in the world to grow a tech company from startup to unicorn."

Discussing the Apply AI Strategy, she noted that the European Commission aims to

accelerate adoption across all sectors to ensure innovation reaches real markets. Citing the EuroHPC and European Scale Up Fund as concrete mechanisms supporting deep-tech development. **The EVP underlined that building internal capacity in chips, quantum and dual-use technologies is essential for Europe's security and democratic resilience** - reaffirming the Commission's commitment to the entrepreneurs reshaping Europe's technological future.

Henna Virkkunen, Executive Vice-President for Technological Sovereignty, Security, and Democracy

"Europe's technological sovereignty is not about closing borders or picking winners, it's about creating the conditions for innovation to thrive, for startups to scale, and for unicorns to emerge and stay in Europe."



AWARD CEREMONY

Europe's Rising Tech Stars: Future Unicorn Award Panel & Ceremony

EVP Henna Virkkunen opened the Future Unicorn Award ceremony and introduced a panel discussion centred on one key question: how can Europe turn world-class deep-tech innovation into globally-scaled companies?

Speakers emphasised that celebrating European success stories helps build confidence in the ecosystem and attracts the talent and capital needed to scale.

Founders of our finalist scale-ups noted that while Europe has strengthened early-stage support, the next bottleneck is scaling. They stressed the need to mobilise "full-stack" financing and enable ambitious companies to grow into global leaders. Access to timely, large funding rounds, alongside clear benchmarks and deployment pathways is essential to building trust with customers, investors, and markets.

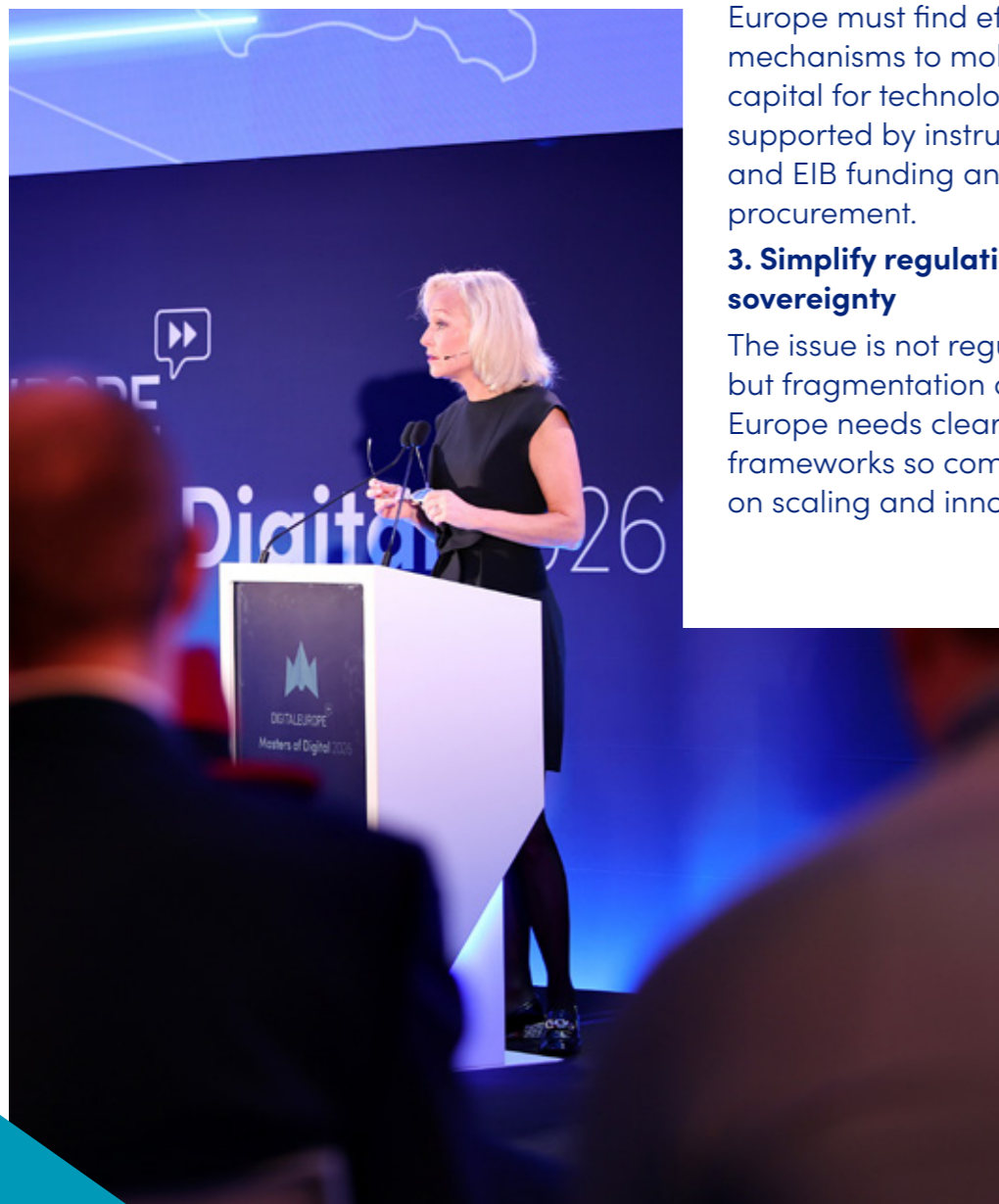
The Future Unicorn Award, supported by Schwarz Digits, celebrates European scale-ups with the potential to become the continent's next unicorn since 2018. This year's finalists include Peter Lohdal, CQO of Sparrow Quantum, Valérian Giesz, Co-Founder and COO of Quandela and Ilkka Varjos, COO of Canatu. These companies are not only contributing to the digital economy but are reshaping it through breakthrough innovation and rapid growth. This year's winner **Quandela** (France) develops industry-grade quantum computing solutions, including datacentre-ready systems and cloud-accessible processors with industrial value.



DAY 2 – 26 FEBRUARY

Welcome Remarks

Day 2 of Masters of Digital 2026 opened with remarks from **Cecilia Bonefeld-Dahl, Director-General of DIGITALEUROPE**, who focused on Europe’s competitiveness and the need to make Europe the easiest place to do business. She underlined that Europe has the capital, companies and talent, but structural complexity, regulatory fragmentation, and overlapping rules remain major obstacles to scaling and innovation.



Key Takeaways:

Europe’s competitiveness agenda should focus on three priorities:

1. Make doing business easier in Europe

Europe needs a 28th regime to simplify cross-border operations and reduce administrative burdens.

2. Unlock capital for innovation

Europe must find effective mechanisms to mobilise more capital for technological innovation, supported by instruments such as EIF and EIB funding and pre-commercial procurement.

3. Simplify regulation and define sovereignty

The issue is not regulation itself, but fragmentation and overlap. Europe needs clearer, more coherent frameworks so companies can focus on scaling and innovation.

KEYNOTE

From Ambition to Execution: Financing Europe’s Digital Backbone

Nadia Calviño President of the European Investment Bank positioned the European Investment Bank (EIB) as a central actor for de-risking investments, emphasising that Europe’s challenge is scaling, not talent. On defence, she outlined a five-pillar strategy covering infrastructure, industrial capacity, R&D, SMEs, and specialised funds.

To bridge the investment gap, Calviño highlighted the importance of mobilising household savings. She proposed overcoming market fragmentation and risk aversion through legislative reform and an “exit toolbox” featuring convertible instruments and pre-IPO support. Citing the Tech Champions Initiative, she stressed that Europe must change its risk-taking culture to attract private capital.

Ultimately, Calviño called for unified action and pan-European procurement to ensure technological leadership and permanent security through a stronger European project.

Nadia Calviño, President, European Investment Bank

“The European Investment Bank Group is absolutely committed to reach the necessary scale and speed. Europe’s time is now.”

Moderated by:
Cecilia Bonefeld-Dahl, Director General, DIGITALEUROPE



PANEL DISCUSSION

Breaking the Code: Women in Tech Leadership

This session featured the founding members of the ELEVATE initiative, a public-private network of European female leaders in tech. They emphasised the urgent need for a gender-balanced approach to technology development, shifting from viewing women primarily as users to recognising them as active builders and leaders within the digital ecosystem. The discussion covered national strategies from Norway, Estonia, Germany, Ukraine, alongside EU-wide initiatives, focusing on the connection between education, policy, and resilience.

Panellists stressed that achieving gender balance requires a unified ecosystem where government, academia, and business collaborate from early childhood onwards.

Speakers presented successful national strategies including:

- integrating tech education into non-traditional fields (e.g., nursing),
- establishing gender quotas for corporate boards,
- removing psychological barriers for girls through role models,
- and fast reskilling programmes, exemplified by Ukraine’s “digital tiger” model, which uses AI-based mentorship.

They concluded that diverse leadership leads to higher returns and stronger innovation, and that international cooperation is needed to promote women’s participation in AI and defence related tech.



Key Takeaways:

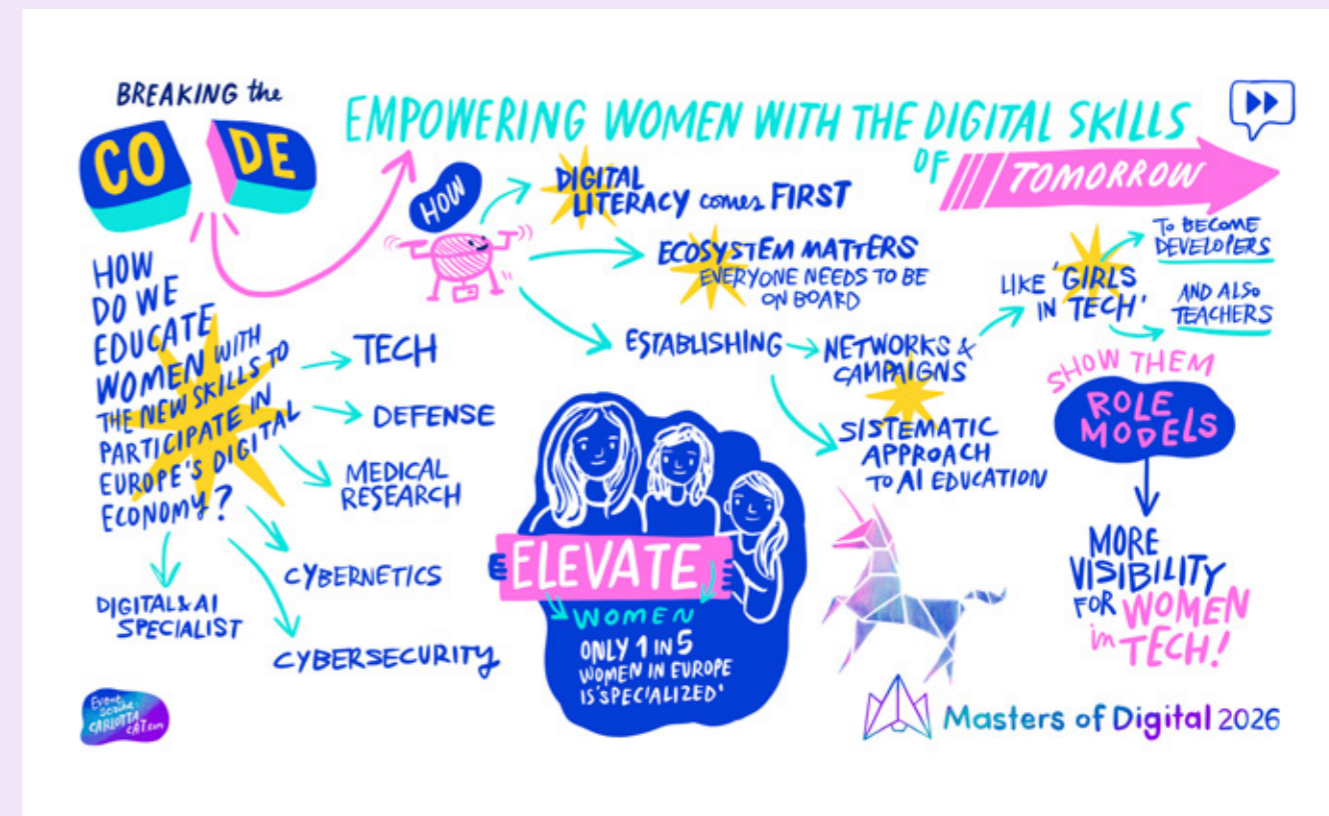
Karianne Tung, Minister of Digitalisation and Public Governance, Norway
“It is not about creating a new female Elon Musk but rather female role models inspiring more women to go into tech”

Liisa-Ly Pakosta, Minister of Justice and Digital Affairs, Estonia
“In Estonia, we want everyone from an early age and regardless of gender, to become not just users, but builders of technology.”

Prof. Dr. Kristina Sinemus, Minister for Digitalisation and Innovation, Hessen
“If women are fully integrated into tech development, they will also naturally shape innovation and communication”

Despina Spanou, Deputy Director-General, DG CNECT, European Commission
“Only 1 in 5 ICT specialist in Europe is a woman and as defence increasingly becomes tech-driven, we must elevate talent and bring more women into this space”

Valeriya Ionan, Advisor to the Minister of Defence of Ukraine
“I would love ELEVATE to become the first women initiative in defence tech, digital transformation and AI”



PANEL DISCUSSION

Securing the Foundations of Europe's Digital Economy: Connectivity and Infrastructure

"If we do not innovate, we die."

Audrey Scozzaro Ferrazzini

This bold statement set the tone for a session focused on transforming Europe's digital infrastructure from a fragmented collection of 27 national rulebooks into a unified powerhouse.

The proposed **Digital Networks Act (DNA)** emerged as the session's centrepiece, designed to instil a single "harmonised DNA" across the Union to ensure connectivity remains a foundational enabler of competitiveness.

Policy experts and industry leaders argued that leadership requires shifting from isolated national policies to coordinated EU-level action on spectrum and satellite governance. A key highlight was the proposed "passport" system, a reform intended to grant operators seamless cross-border mobility. To lead the transition to 6G, the panel agreed that Europe must prioritize simplified, pragmatic solutions like single-member-state notifications. The discussion concluded with a market-driven reality check: **scaling deep-tech depends less on new subsidies and more on harmonised licensing and robust public demand.**



Key Takeaways:

MEP Pilar del Castillo Vera, EPP, Spain, Member of the ITRE Committee

"Connectivity is crucial for the single market. The DNA will play a role in strengthening it, boosting competitiveness and enabling innovation."

Peter Stuckmann, Head of Unit, Electronic Communications Policy, Implementation and Enforcement, European Commission

"Infrastructures are getting more critical, so we need to respond to risks and threats and reduce our dependencies."

Audrey Scozzaro Ferrazzini, Vice-President Government Affairs, Qualcomm

"Less fragmentation, scale, keep the IP and continue to build the partnership that we are doing all together with a number of players."

Jaume Sanpera, CEO and Co-Founder, Sateliot

"The main challenge on the regulatory aspect is fragmentation."

Moderated by: Alberto di Felice, Legal and Policy Counsel, DIGITALEUROPE



PANEL DISCUSSION

Can Europe's Health Policy Keep Pace With the AI Wave?

The discussion centred on a pivotal question: can Europe's regulatory framework keep pace with the rapid evolution of AI in healthcare?

Panelists agreed that **while the European Health Data Space (EHDS) and the AI Act are "game changers," the challenge lies in harmonised implementation across 27 Member States.**

To avoid stifling innovation, Europe must move beyond regulation toward investment in infrastructure, workforce readiness, and the elimination of data silos.

A live audience poll revealed cautious optimism, with 50% feeling only "somewhat ready" for large-scale deployment yet identifying medical devices and diagnostics as the areas where AI will deliver the most significant impact. Ultimately, the consensus was clear: if Europe regulates differently than global peers, it risks increasing costs and delaying life-saving therapies for patients.



Key Takeaways:

Dr Peter Arlett, Head, Data Analytics and Methods Task Force, European Medicines Agency

"EMA has at least 50 years' experience in our daily work in safety monitoring and lifecycle; we see the benefits of real-world evidence."

Annick Faes, VP IT and CIO Medical Devices EMEA, Johnson & Johnson

"Workforce readiness and upscaling of people is crucial – we all need to make sure that we start adopting AI and new technologies."

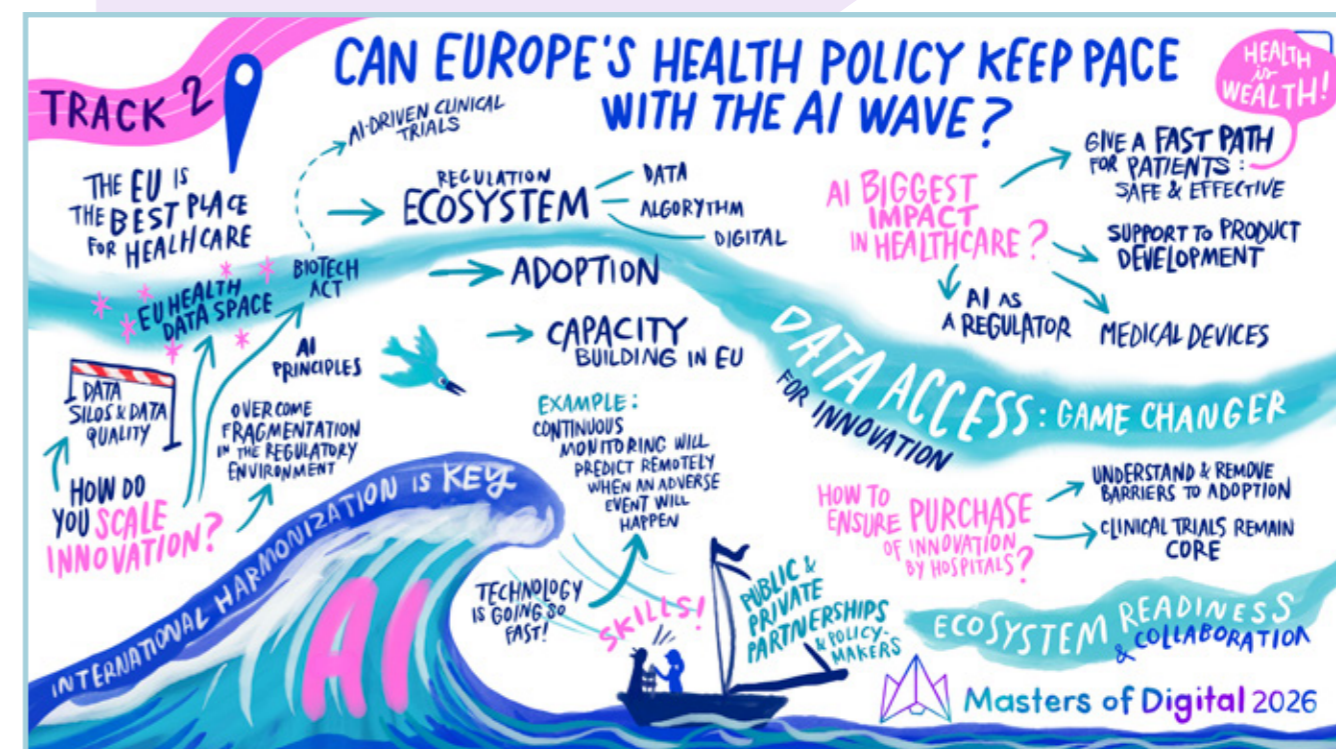
Bartek Madej, Head, Digital Health International and Europe IT, BMS

"Health is equal to wealth – if we catch diseases earlier, we have a healthier society."

Marco Marsella, Acting Deputy Director General for Health and Director for "Digital, EU4Health and Health Systems Modernisation" at the European Commission's Directorate General for Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE)

"Access to data is paramount – this changed the approach to having an interoperable system across the 27 Member States."

Moderated by: Ray Pinto, Senior Director for Vertical Strategy and Business Development, DIGITALEUROPE



PANEL DISCUSSION

From Compliance to Capability: Europe's Cyber Resilience Challenge

This session highlighted that in an era of deteriorating global security, **cybersecurity fragmentation is no longer just a financial burden, it is a systemic threat.** A vulnerability in one Member State can expose all.

Panellists from NATO, the European Commission, ENISA, national governments, and the private sector agreed that because 85% of digital infrastructure is privately owned, security can only be achieved through trusted public-private partnerships and by giving industry a formal role in defence planning. Regular joint cyber-resilience exercises were highlighted as essential for building expertise and integrating security across all operational domains.

Speakers stressed that Europe must move beyond "made in Europe" narratives toward

"tailored for Europe" solutions that meet real operational requirements. Lessons from Ukraine demonstrated the importance of space-based intelligence and the risks of relying on external sources. As supply-chain vulnerabilities grow more complex with AI, the message was clear: **the time for excuses has passed, and Europe must act now to secure its critical dependencies before the next crisis occurs.**



Key Takeaways:

Jean Charles Ellermann-Kingombe, Assistant Secretary General for Cyber and Digital Transformation, NATO

"As the security landscape deteriorates, reducing critical dependencies is no longer optional but essential to safeguarding our resilience and security"

Jeffrey Apeldoorn, VP Missions ESA/EU, ICEYE

"What we need is a federated system. The technology is there, the procurement tools are there, and Europe has the capabilities. The real question is whether we are ready to move faster and take the lead."

Juhan Lepassaar, Executive Director, ENISA

"The vulnerability ecosystem is becoming more complex, especially with AI. As with post-quantum risks, we need timely and proportionate action now to be ready by 2030, not after the risks materialise."

Nanna-Louise Linde, Vice President of European Government Affairs, Microsoft

"Around 85% of digital infrastructure is owned by the private sector, which makes close cooperation with governments

indispensable. As we have seen in Ukraine, trusted public-private partnerships are critical to responding quickly and effectively to cyber threats."

Despina Spanou, Deputy Director-General, DG CNECT, European Commission

"Cybersecurity must be addressed in a broader threat context, combining regulation with concrete action and coordinated cooperation among Member States and industry, including compliance with the Cyber Resilience Act to strengthen product security."

Karianne Tung, Minister of Digitalisation and Public Governance, Norway

"Regular joint exercises between the public and private sectors help build expertise and integrate security across all areas of activity. Achieving the right balance between security and transparency depends on strong, continuous public-private partnerships."

Moderated by: Milda Basiulyte, Senior Executive Director for Digital Policy, DIGITALEUROPE



PANEL DISCUSSION

AI, Grids and Data: Building Europe's Next Energy System

This session demonstrated that **AI and energy are now inseparable**: as AI drives massive increases in power demand, intelligent electrification is the only path to restoring Europe's competitiveness. The central takeaway was the **need to align policymakers, regulators, and industry to strengthen Europe's competitiveness in energy and AI** by simplifying frameworks, modernising grids, and building a resilient energy system that enables AI, innovation, and digitalisation to drive economic growth.

The "one-stop-shop" permitting structure was highlighted as a major step toward accelerating grid modernisation and data centre deployment. Panellists also noted that AI can significantly reduce energy costs by improving predictive maintenance, forecasting and planning. With 67% of the audience agreeing that political-industrial alignment is the top priority, the panel concluded that **Europe must transition to a decentralised, data-driven electric landscape** to ensure the future is no longer held back by the past.

Key Takeaways

Niamh Gallagher, Country Lead, AWS Ireland and EMEA Director, Infrastructure Public Policy

"To be successful as Europe in this really competitive environment, we need three things: simplification, modernization and the renewable system."

Karel Havlíček, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Industry and Trade, Czech Republic

"There's no system of energy without AI."

Renate Nikolay, Deputy Director-General for Communication Networks, Content and Technology, DG CONNECT

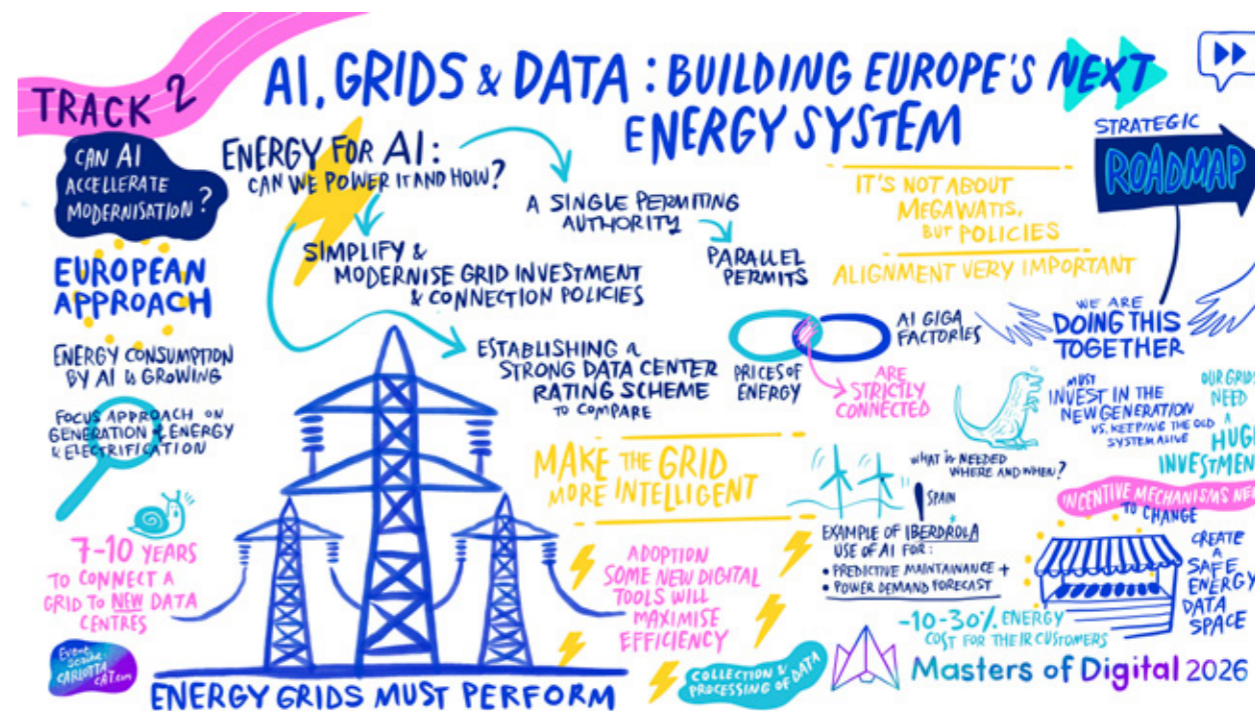
"Enabling AI in energy is not so much an issue of regulation but bringing the pieces together."

MEP Bruno Tobbacq, S&D, Belgium, Member of the ITRE Committee

"We must solve our competitiveness problem not tomorrow, but today – or even better, yesterday."

Peter Weckesser, Chief Digital Officer, Schneider Electric and President, DIGITALEUROPE

"We must make sure we don't protect the past from the future, but the future from the past."





KEYNOTE

The Energy–digital Nexus

Dan Jørgensen, Commissioner for Energy and Housing, emphasised that Europe is at a critical juncture where digital technologies and AI have become essential for energy security and independence. The Commissioner urged the continent to turn “urgent necessity into great invention,” warning that although the EU is well-positioned to lead, it must manage the sector’s energy footprint responsibly.

Grids were identified as the primary bottleneck and digitalisation as the solution. Digital tools enable far more efficient use of existing infrastructure, reducing delays and accelerators for renewable integration.

Alexandros Paterakis Deputy CEO, Executive Board Member of Digital & Advanced Services, PPC Group emphasised that the technology is available today, and that industry must now take a “leap of faith” to deploy it at scale.

Sabine Erlinghagen CEO, Grid Software, Siemens and **Peter Weckesser Chief Digital Officer, Schneider Electric and President, DIGITALEUROPE** concluded that Europe must “dare to be bold,” leveraging its strong industrial foundation to build an intelligent, future-proof grid capable of supporting the next era of AI-driven innovation.



KEYNOTE DISCUSSION



Key Takeaways:

Dan Jørgensen, Commissioner for Energy and Housing

“Europe can’t afford to fall behind, especially when we have what it takes to lead the race.”

Alexandros Paterakis, Deputy CEO, Executive Board Member of Digital & Advanced Services, PPC Group

“The time is now. The tech works, we only need more of it.”



KEYNOTE

Ukraine's Digital Frontline: Europe's Wake-up Call

Valeriya Ionan Advisor to the Minister of Defense of Ukraine, Advisor to the Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine delivered a compelling keynote detailing Ukraine's rise as a global "digital transformation tiger," now ranked 5th worldwide for digital public services. The Diia ecosystem with over 44 million users has enabled a "state in an app" model that sustained essential services throughout wartime.

Ionan explained that Ukraine is transitioning from a digital state to an agentic state, powered by a national large language model and an AI Factory. This innovation cycle is mirrored on the battlefield, where the country operates a six-month innovation cycle, increasing drone production from seven to over 550 companies.

Ukraine invites partners to test emerging technologies in real-world conditions, demonstrating a multi-domain technological war effort where rapid innovation becomes a matter of survival.

Valeriya Ionan, Advisor to the Minister of Defense of Ukraine, Advisor to the Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine on a voluntary, non-executive basis, Ex Wartime Deputy Minister, MDT Ukraine 2019-2025

"The modern war is a technological war, and it has several domains."



PANEL

Digital and Defence: Europe's Game Changer

The panel delivered a stark warning: **while Ukraine is operationally prepared, Europe remains insufficiently equipped for modern, multi-domain warfare.**

The discussion centred on Software-Defined Defence, arguing that starting with hardware like tanks or drones is a "historic strategic error" if the software and decision-making systems are not prioritised first.

Currently, less than 5% of defence spending goes to digital capabilities. Experts argued this imbalance must be corrected to avoid a growing gap between "swimming in sensors" and "drowning in data."

To succeed, Europe must move beyond the "valley of death" in testing and create a rapid multinational acquisition mechanism, treating industry as a strategic partner. **The ultimate goal is information dominance, turning every battlefield asset into a digital node, ensuring that those who see and process data first, act first.**

General Seán Clancy – Chair, European Military Committee

"We have to understand culturally that industry is as important, if not more important, than actual military capability"

LtGen Michael Vetter – Head of the Cyber/Information Technology Department and Chief Information Officer, Federal Ministry of Defense (Berlin)

"If we want to have information, decision, and effects dominance, this will only work with digital solutions."

Viktoriia Yaremchuk, Co-Founder & CEO, Farsight Vision

"One of the key challenges is how we turn these data in actionable insights for decision-making and all of that in a matter of minutes."

Henrik Bliddal: Head of National Security and Defense, Geopolitical & Government Relations, Nokia

"We cannot have high-risk windows in the network. We need to have trusted networks."

Moderated by:
Cecilia Bonefeld-Dahl, Director-General, DIGITALEUROPE



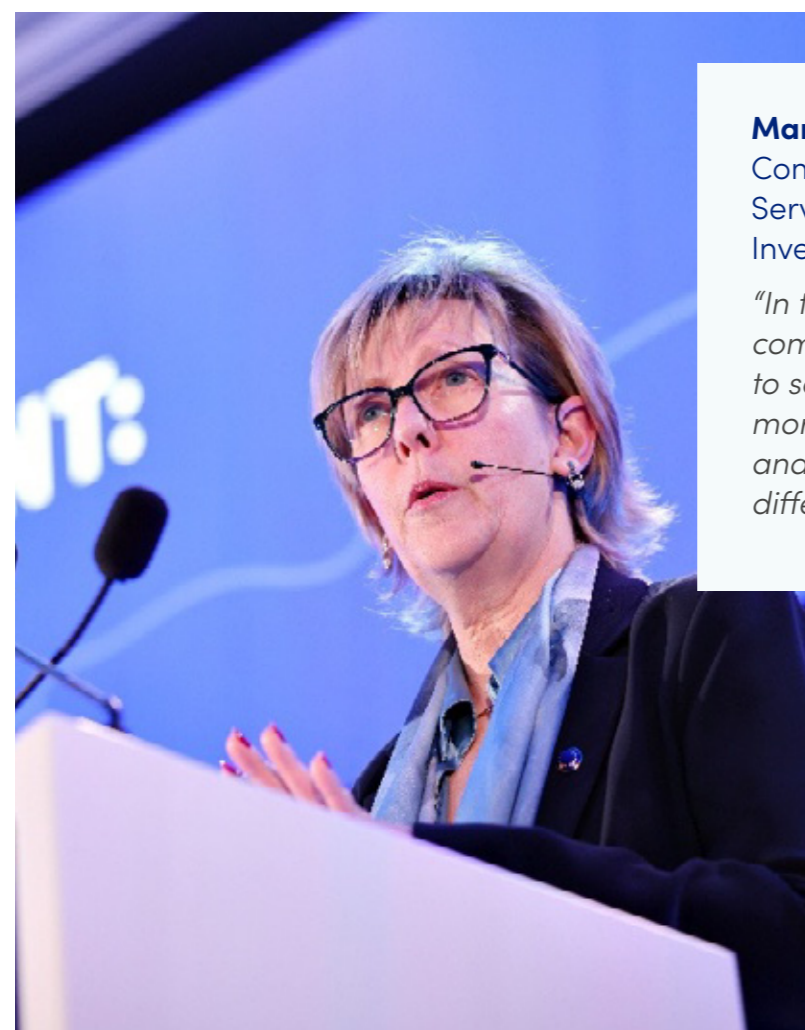
KEYNOTE

Europe Can Invent: Can It Invest Too?

Commissioner for Financial Services and the Savings and Investments Union Maria Luís Albuquerque focused her remarks on innovation financing and financial data sharing.

She stressed that European companies struggle to scale due to the fragmentation of European capital markets and the inefficient allocation of capital. She underlined the need for a more risk-ready financing environment and emphasised the vital role of venture and growth capital.

The Commission will present measures to achieve this goal in 2026, within the context of the Savings and Investments Union (SIU). Furthermore, she linked the importance of data sharing to the successful implementation of the SIU. She notably highlighted the opportunities stemming from Open Finance, including providing investors with access to better financial products, as well as empowering both innovators and incumbent financial players.



Maria Luís Albuquerque, Commissioner for Financial Services and the Savings and Investments Union

"In the EU, we are good at starting companies, but we need to do more to scale them. And in the digital world, more than anywhere else, scale and network effects make all the difference."



KEYNOTE



The keynote delivered a powerful call for transatlantic unity in digital healthcare, stressing that innovation is only successful if it reaches the patient, wherever they are.

Strengthening EU-US cooperation is not just a preference but a strategic necessity to protect shared values and remove digital barriers. By aligning on international standards for AI, cybersecurity, and data governance, both regions can mitigate risks early and avoid innovation-stifling blind spots. The session concluded that "if we want to make innovation work, it has to work for all of us." Through deep public-private partnerships and open dialogue, a unified ecosystem ensures that patients worldwide gain fair, timely access to the most advanced medical solutions.

Claudia Herben Vice President and Global Head of Technology, MedTech Surgery and MedTech Digital Surgery Johnson & Johnson

"If we don't have a strong collaboration globally, worldwide, it will prevent us even from bringing innovation to the patient wherever that patient is in the world."

KEYNOTE DISCUSSION

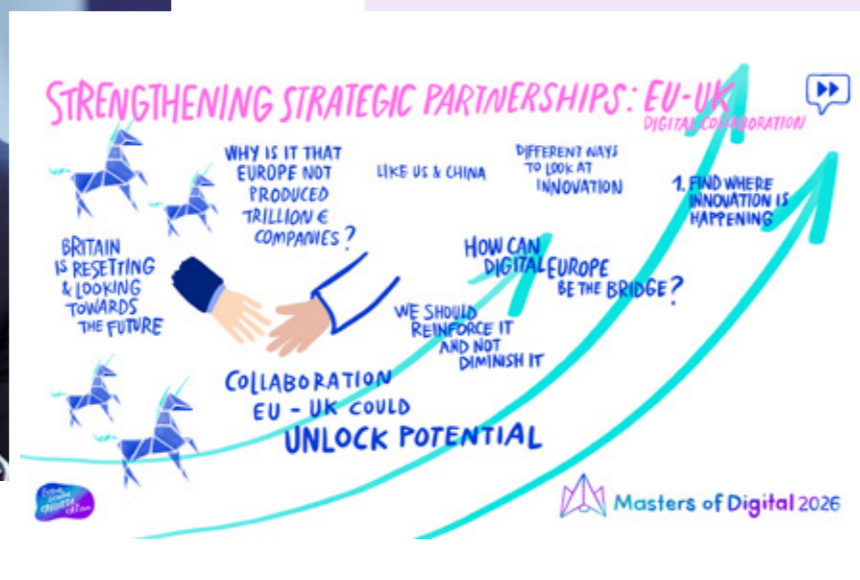
Strengthening Strategic Partnerships: EU-UK Digital Collaboration

Peter Kyle UK State Secretary of Business and Trade delivered a compelling vision for a “Brexit reset,” framing a closer EU-UK partnership as a democratic mandate focused on the future rather than the past. He challenged the audience by asking why Europe has never produced a trillion-dollar company, noting that while the continent possesses all the necessary “constituent parts” for global leadership, it still lacks the coordination to scale them. Highlighting the UK’s strengths, including being the third-largest AI market, Kyle argued that integrated collaboration in AI, biotech, and space can unlock potential that separate territories cannot achieve alone.

The Secretary of State emphasized that resilience and sovereignty should be tackled jointly among allies to maximize economic benefit. By aligning infrastructure, pension-led capital, and skills, the EU and UK can move beyond legacy barriers. Kyle’s message was that by coordinating policy rather than working in isolation, the continent can finally upscale its best ideas.

Peter Kyle, UK State Secretary for Business and Trade

“It’s very clear when you look at the global economy, the future lies in AI, automation, drone technology, climate technology, health technology and life sciences, biotech.”



KEYNOTE DISCUSSION

Investing in Europe's Digital Growth Through Transatlantic Partnership

This conversation reinforced that **the transatlantic bond remains the most vital economic relationship globally**, despite rising geopolitical vulnerabilities. **Hendrik Bourgeois Senior Vice President Public Policy and Government Affairs, Mastercard** highlighted the synergy between U.S. leadership in AI and cloud and Europe's industrial assets, arguing that Europe must prioritize "value for money" and scale over protectionist "buy European" policies. He called for a shift toward confidence in partnerships to reduce fragmentation and build trust.

From a defence perspective, **Dan Hermansen CEO, MyDefence** contrasted the agile, large-scale procurement processes in the U.S. with Europe's slower, fragmented approach. He noted that while European technology is

world-class, **a unified Single Market is the only "game changer" capable of allowing European companies to scale with the speed of their counterparts.** The session concluded that engagement and partnership is the path to ensuring Europe's digital and industrial growth.

Hendrik Bourgeois, Senior Vice President Public Policy and Government Affairs, Mastercard
"We should be focusing on value for money and try to get scale in Europe."

Dan Hermansen, CEO, MyDefence
"Having a more single market in Europe would really be the game changer."

Moderated by **Cecilia Bonefeld-Dahl**, Director General, DIGITALEUROPE



KEYNOTE DISCUSSION

AN INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVE

Ireland's Vision for a More Competitive Digital Europe

This session highlighted Ireland's emerging priorities, the importance of its upcoming EU Council Presidency and the role industry can play in shaping them. **Una Fitzpatrick Director, Tech Ireland** pointed to **three core themes already defined by the Irish government: competitiveness, security, and values.** She stressed that the presidency will be judged not by ambition, but by delivery.

The discussion also emphasised that Europe must move faster if it wants to restore competitiveness and maintain leadership in a volatile geopolitical environment. Drawing inspiration from Ukraine's speed of delivery, Una Fitzpatrick argued that Europe should focus on areas it can control, such as procurement,

skills and talent, and making the Digital Single Market function more effectively in practice. The session concluded with a clear message: the Irish Presidency will be a key opportunity to turn existing policy work into concrete results, with national trade associations and companies both playing an active role in driving momentum.

Una Fitzpatrick, Director, Tech Ireland

*"We've definitely come from the era of maybe setting targets, but actually the era now is **delivery.**"*



Concluding Remarks

As Masters of Digital 2026 came to a close, the final message was clear: Europe must move with speed, execution and delivery to strengthen its competitiveness and resilience.

Peter Weckesser, Chief Digital Officer of Schneider Electric and President of DIGITALEUROPE, reflected on the main takeaways from the two days. He highlighted the strong backing for the AI Tech Declaration, now supported by more than 75 CEOs, as a sign that DIGITALEUROPE's voice is both relevant and supported by industry. He also pointed to Ukraine's remarkable achievements, Europe's strong startup and unicorn ecosystem, and the need to ensure that innovation can scale and grow into major industry drivers.

Looking ahead, he stressed that Europe must focus on three interconnected priorities: defence, energy and digital. Defence is increasingly linked to digital capabilities, energy competitiveness depends on electrification and digitisation, and every industry today is a digital industry. Europe

must regain a competitive position with global partners and act with urgency.

Closing the event, **Cecilia Bonefeld-Dahl, Director General of DIGITALEUROPE**, underlined the role of industry as a stabilising force in a difficult geopolitical context. She emphasised that digital industry enables collaboration and progress across borders and remains central to Europe's competitiveness and resilience.

"Industry is the bridge in this difficult geopolitical situation, let's work together."

Peter Weckesser



Gala Dinner & Dual-Use Technology Award

The gala dinner and award ceremony took place on the evening of 25 February at the Théâtre du Vaudeville, welcoming over 125 high-level guests.

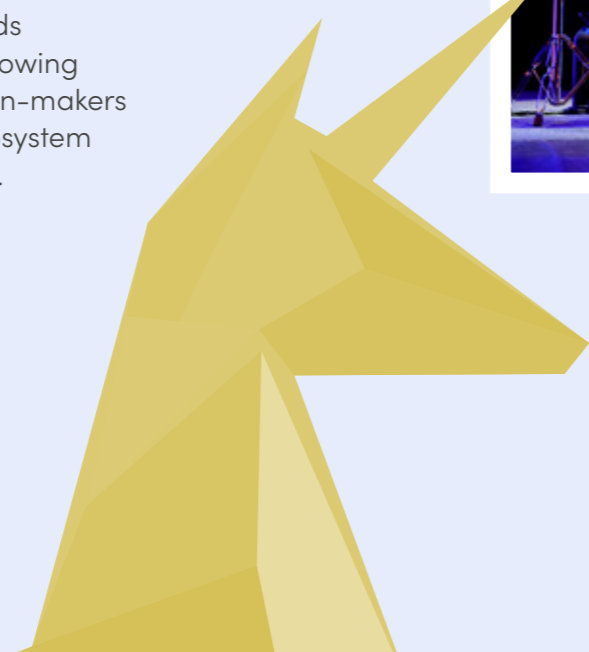
The winner of the Dual-Use Technology Award was announced by **Valeriya Ionan, Advisor to the Minister of Defence of Ukraine and Advisor to the Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine (voluntary, non-executive), and former Wartime Deputy Minister at MDT Ukraine (2019–2025).**

The Dual-Use Technology Award, delivered in partnership with the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine and supported by Helsing, recognises breakthrough technologies with both civilian and defence applications. **This year's award went to Sateliot (Spain), a scale-up building the first 5G-standard LEO satellite constellation enabling standard NB IoT devices to connect directly from space.**

About the Future Unicorn & Dual-Use Technology Award

Since 2018, the Future Unicorn Awards have showcased Europe's next tech champions and amplified their voice in EU policy debates. In 2025, DIGITALEUROPE expanded the initiative with the Dual-Use Technology Award to highlight innovations strengthening Europe's security and resilience across both civilian and defence applications.

DIGITALEUROPE's manifesto sets a clear ambition: double Europe's unicorns by 2030. The Future Unicorn and Dual-Use Technology Awards advance this goal by spotlighting fast-growing innovators, connecting them with decision-makers and investors, and strengthening the ecosystem needed for European scale-ups to thrive.





About DIGITALEUROPE

DIGITALEUROPE is the leading trade association representing digitally transforming industries in Europe. We stand for a regulatory environment that enables European businesses and citizens to prosper from digital technologies. We wish Europe to grow, attract and sustain the world's best digital talents and technology companies. Together with our members, we shape the industry policy positions on all relevant legislative matters and contribute to the development and implementation of relevant EU policies. Our membership represents over 56,000 businesses who operate and invest in Europe. It includes 123 corporations which are global leaders in their field of activity, as well as 43 national trade associations from across Europe.

Our Mission

As leaders of digital industries, we engage with policymakers and citizens to shape a more secure and competitive business environment for a stronger digital Europe.

Our Vision

We strive for a Europe leading on digital for its people, its businesses, and the climate. About Masters of Digital Masters of Digital is our annual flagship summit and Europe's largest digital policy conference. Every February, we bring together top EU policymakers, digital industry leaders, and representatives from academia and civil society to shape the EU digital policy agenda for the year to come. Masters of Digital has seen the participation of European Presidents and Commissioners, Members of the European Parliament, national ministers and C-suite representatives of the largest digital businesses in Europe and beyond.

Thanks to our sponsors



Masters of Digital 2027

The leading digital policy gathering in Europe, bringing together more than **2,500 participants** in Brussels and online.

The event explores the most pressing digital policy priorities, including **AI, cybersecurity, sustainability, energy, healthcare, defence and security**, and more. Through high-level keynotes, interactive panels, breakout sessions and roundtables, it convenes policymakers, industry leaders and experts to drive forward Europe's digital agenda.

Typical and past editions speakers: **Ursula von der Leyen, Henna Virkkunen, Stéphane Séjourné, Mark Rutte, Dan Jørgensen and Valdis Dombrovskis**, alongside CEOs, innovators and leading voices from across the digital ecosystem.

	€60,000	€50,000	€35,000
Packages available	Platinum	Gold	Silver
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Guaranteed and complimentary delegate places at the on-site element (due to venue capacity restrictions) in addition to your speaker (if applicable)	3	2	1
Place at exclusive VIP additional events (dinner, lunch etc. where organised)	2	1	1
Opportunity to have an exhibition booth at the venue - to ensure maximum impact we ask that this is a hands on and exciting experience for attendees. DIGITALEUROPE are to sign off on all booths to guarantee audience satisfaction	✓	○	○
Guaranteed speaking slot - session choice to be discussed and agreed with DIGITALEUROPE, stage dependent on registrations and room capacities	✓	✓	✓ <small>Second Stage</small>
Opportunity to help shape the chosen session your company representative will be participating in, including audience polls	✓	○	○
Opportunity to host video content or documents online for the virtual audience	✓	✓	○
Video interview opportunity with your speaker - with a clip included in the event highlights video, and a full interview edited into a standalone video (filmed at event)	✓	○	○
Access to booking private meeting rooms for bilateral meetings on site and assistance with coordinating meetings with other event speakers and VIPs	✓	✓	○

Bronze Sponsorship Package €15,000

- > Access to VIP programme
- > Named as sponsor across the event and company logo on event communications

Masters of Digital 2027

VIP Dinner Packages (3 February)

The evening before the main event, we will host a VIP dinner for 140 high level attendees.

Exclusive Corporate Dinner Speaker	€40,000
Dinner Tables - 8 seats per table	€10,000

Including:

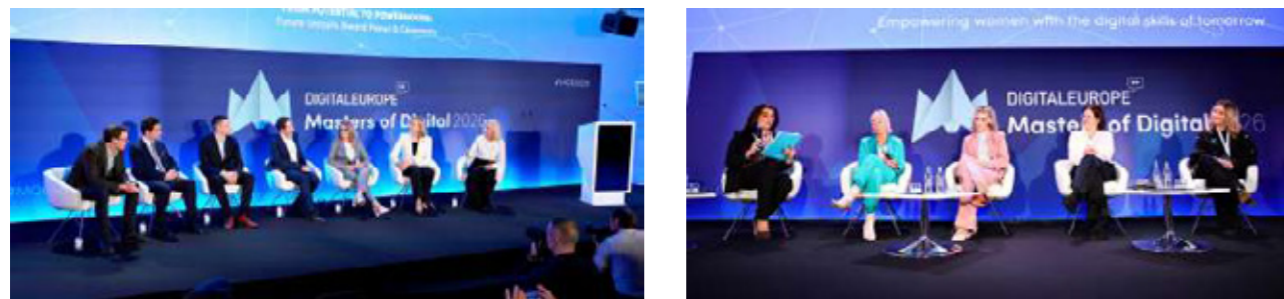
- Named as sponsor across the event with company logo on event communications

VIP Lunch Packages

Exclusive VIP lunch sponsor	€20,000
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Bespoke sponsorship packages available including for NTAs.

If you are interested please enquire with the team to discuss further details.



Technology Award 2027

Exclusive package for Venture Capitals to Sponsor the Awards at the Master of Digital 2027

Providing visibility with EU institutions and digital policymakers, putting you in front row in advocating for the best enabling environment for EU scale up growth.

Sponsorship opportunity exclusive for **European companies**. **Benefits for both Awards include:**

- Co-design roundtables
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- Speaking role
- Founder Gala Dinner invitation
- Nominate a company for each category (two in total)

Future Unicorn Award (2 slots)	€50,000
Dual-Use Award (2 slots)	€50,000





#MOD2026

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