{DEVELOPERS ALLIANCE}

EU POLICY VISION

Preamble

The Developers Alliance is a passionate policy advocate for software developers in the US and Europe. Active in both Brussels and Washington DC, **we bring developer voices to the table where digital issues are being debated.**

Developers are an active and progressive community – they are your neighbours, friends and family, and aren't only based in global tech hubs, but in every city and village across Europe. With local roots and global visions, they are **building solutions to Europe's most pressing challenges; sustainability and social progress, global competitiveness, and promoting an open and equitable international marketplace** where Europe's best and brightest can succeed.

Developers as a group are pragmatic and optimistic problem-solvers. Building innovative solutions is in their DNA and the value that developers bring to policy discussions should not be underestimated. The developer community is often overlooked when it comes to policy decisions, and policymakers don't always understand how regulation affects the developer community and the digital marketplace where their innovations are born. **We are sharing our insights, ideas and vision for creating and sustaining an environment that allows us to continue building solutions, innovating, and creating opportunities in Europe and beyond.** In today's interconnected world, countries, political unions and trade blocs cannot operate in a vacuum – unilateral policy approaches can disrupt innovative and vibrant digital ecosystems.

Build a data driven and interconnected economy

It has been said that data is the new oil. This is wrong. Data is, in fact, the new sand.

Data is not scarce - it streams constantly from everything and everyone around us. Data, like sand, is everywhere and a few grains here or there have virtually no value. But sand becomes valuable when it is refined into raw materials from which we can build: concrete, glass, or silicon wafers. Without these refined components there are no roads, no buildings, no windows, and no microchips.

Similarly, data becomes useful once it's cleaned, organized and analysed alongside other data. Its value is in the insights we can uncover once it's refined, and in the services we can build, problems we can solve, and new tools we can bring to market based on these insights. **Useful data is produced, not collected.**

While it's convenient to talk about the "digital economy", all economic activity today depends on data and interconnection – from innovative solutions to technical issues, to finance, to solving climate change. **For developers to thrive, they must be able to access, process, and share data between systems, across borders, and amongst one another.** Developers understand the need for guidelines around safe handling and storage of information and take measures to properly handle the data that is so critical to their success.

To foster a successful and competitive Developer community, we strive towards and ask the EU to:

1. Promote the free-flow of data within the Digital Single Market and between our major trading partners

2. Balance the need for data protection with the promotion of data access

3. Promote ready access to public data, and invest in the production of curated datasets

4. Encourage the voluntary sharing of data, strong data management and security practices

5. Create a permanent framework for transatlantic data-flows

Build better evidence-based regulation practices

The developer community is a diverse workforce representing a broad range of social and demographic viewpoints. What they share is a love of problem solving and a drive to acquire leading-edge skills and knowledge in the very areas where policy is now focused. What worries developers is not their own ability to succeed, **but their ability to navigate in a landscape where regulators and policy makers are constantly remaking the rules of the game.**

Inappropriate intervention, no matter how well meaning, can disrupt the ecosystem that developers rely on - often causing more harm than good. When required, developers favour fact-based and measured corrections, as free as possible from political intervention, and only where the market itself is unable to course-correct on its own. **Developers stand ready to advise, inform, and contribute to the policy making process.**

To foster a successful and competitive developer community, we strive towards and ask the EU to:

1. Recognise that the imposition of EU regulation on foreign digital markets legitimizes foreign regulation inside the EU

2. Ensure that private sector technical experts can effectively engage in early-stage policy exploration by promoting programmes that bring digital experts and policy makers together

3. Promote the parallel assessment of digital policy goals and technical implementation

4. Ensure that policy decisions are evidence-based and free of political bias

5. Recognise that intervention that targets the digital economy's foundational companies impacts all digital economy participants

Build digital skills for digital solutions

The single greatest resource driving digital innovation is people. The availability of skilled developers is our industry's biggest concern.

Policy makers have two ways to increase the number of digitally-skilled developers in the EU. Increasing focus and investment in science, technology, math and engineering training, and in **re-skilling of displaced workers, provides a richer pipeline for tomorrow's skilled workforce.** A focus on skilled immigration increases worker availability.

But not everyone is interested in becoming a developer or a scientist. **By promoting the adoption of digital tools in otherwise non-digital businesses we can both create digital demand and promote familiarity with an industry which some find intimidating.**

To foster a successful and competitive developer community, we strive towards and ask the EU to:

1. Continue to invest in student programs for science, technology, math and engineering

2. Establish programs to train non-digital SMEs on digital business tools to help them compete in an increasingly digital market-place

3. Continue to support accelerators and code camps for aspiring digital entrepreneurs

4. Promote digital training programs focused on diversity and under-represented groups

5. Promote the broad adoption of digital tools across all public institutions

Build digital bridges for digital trade

The digital economy doesn't stop at national and regional borders – developers often build applications and services to address local markets first, but many aspire to target an international market.

The goals of the Digital Single Market are tremendously important to the growth of the EU developer economy. To compete with tomorrow's global champions, **European entrepreneurs must have unrestricted access to the same markets as their foreign competitors.** Within the EU, this means that artificial barriers to digital trade must be identified and eliminated. There is no excuse for internal policies which damage our own economic potential.

For EU developers to thrive, they must also have access to international markets. **Wherever possible, policy makers should strive for regulations that operate in harmony with those of our major trading partners.** A fragmented regulatory environment significantly increases developer costs and discourages them from entering new markets. In extreme cases, the extra-territorial impact of conflicting international regulations could completely isolate European innovators.

To foster a successful and competitive developer community, we strive towards and ask the EU to:

1. Rapidly remove the remaining barriers to a Digital Single Market in the EU

2. Identify and reconcile regulations and policies which prevent EU digital services exports

3. Continue international discussions and cooperation in relevant areas (such as taxation or R&D)

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Conclusion

Developers are the architects of the modern economy. They are a diverse and active community who want nothing more than to improve the world around them. They create jobs, they participate in social debates, and they are the foundation for future European success.

The care and stewardship of the EU's digital competitiveness must take centre stage if we are to be successful in a globally competitive world. Good policy will be carefully tailored to empower our digital entrepreneurs, not to disadvantage them. **But the best possible policy will come when developers and policy makers work together to craft an EU digital market that establishes Europe as the best place to launch tomorrow's global innovators.** The real world and the digital world are now inseparable. Policy that takes this into account will stand the test of time.