

G7 Industry and Technology Ministers convene in Rome to advance industrial competitiveness, digital innovation, and sustainable digital transformation

October 10, 2024

Building on the Verona Industrial, Digital and Tech Ministerial Declaration and the Apulia Leaders Communiqué, the G7 Ministers of Industry, Technology, and Digital gathered in Rome today under the chairmanship of Mr. Adolfo Urso, Minister of Enterprises and Made in Italy. The meeting focused on the transformative impact of digital innovation on economic growth, on industrial competitiveness, and on how to harness digital transformation and Artificial Intelligence (AI) to promote inclusive, sustainable, and resilient economies and social fabrics.

Ministers welcomed representatives from various industries, including startups and innovators. They expressed gratitude to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as a key knowledge partner, and to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) for their valuable contributions. The discussions reaffirmed the unwavering commitment to multilateralism, and the importance of a collaborative, rules-based international system to guide the ethical development and deployment of emerging technologies.

Recognizing the vast potential of digital development to shape a more prosperous world, Ministers emphasized that the future of digital transformation must be rooted in shared democratic values, including gender equality, open markets and on the respect of human rights.

Ministers welcomed the Report on the driving factors and challenges of AI adoption and development among companies, particularly micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). They highlighted the crucial role of emerging technologies in shaping new supply chains and underscored the need for a common vision among international partners to foster a balanced and inclusive global digital ecosystem.

Ministers also welcomed the results of the G7 Semiconductor Point of Contact (PoC) Group, which was established during the Verona Ministerial on March 14th and tasked with exchanging information on issues impacting the semiconductor industry. Against the backdrop of the current international and geopolitical context, Ministers stressed the need for the industry to remain competitive. To do so, the Ministers endorsed priority areas for a coordinated approach to enhance pre-competitive industrial research collaborations: how to make semiconductors more energy efficient and their manufacturing more resilient, as well as explore talent exchanges on these two priority areas. Such collaboration will support the green transition and key emerging technological innovations such as AI. Mindful of the Apulia Leaders' Communiqué on the need for future coordination on relevant criteria that take into account not only economic factors, but also factors linked to the G7 Principles on Resilient and Reliable Supply Chains, they also emphasised the need to build and strengthen resilient and reliable supply chains, especially for semiconductors, and underscored the importance of leveraging a comprehensive and varied policy toolbox.

Moreover, Ministers discussed non-market policies and practices in the semiconductor industry as an urgent and pressing matter to be addressed. Lastly, the Ministers endorsed an information sharing mechanism available to all G7 members to support crisis coordination. Finally, Ministers welcomed Canada's strong interest to continue the works of the PoC on semiconductors during the 2025 Presidency.

Ministers dedicated special attention to digital development in Africa, with contributions from Egypt, India, Kenya, South Africa, South Korea, The Netherlands, Tunisia emphasizing the urgent need to accelerate progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals

(SDGs). The discussions highlighted the importance of bridging digital divides, and strengthening the value chain between G7 and African countries. This also includes addressing challenges associated with digital transformation, while ensuring that the benefits of digital technologies are equitably shared to empower all segments of society. This commitment aligns with international human rights frameworks and underscores the G7's dedication to fostering inclusive and sustainable digital growth.

The G7 Presidency, in collaboration with UNDP, announced significant progress in the co-design of the *"AI Hub for Sustainable Development,"* a pioneering initiative set to focus on key sectors including agriculture, health, infrastructure, education and training, water, and energy, in alignment with the Italian Mattei Plan. This flagship project aims to foster strategic partnerships between the G7 Italian Presidency, and African nations, driving innovation and strengthening local AI ecosystems to unlock new opportunities for industrial growth, technological advancement, and social progress.

The AI Hub will serve as a dynamic platform to support inclusive digital transformation, ensuring that the benefits of safe, secure, and trustworthy AI are widely shared across communities. By promoting collaboration, capacity building, and knowledge exchange, the Hub embodies the G7's commitment to *"Growing Together"* with partner countries, advancing shared goals of sustainable development and ensuring that the digital age contributes to a more inclusive and prosperous future for all.

