



European Economic and Social Committee | Comité économique et social européen

PERIOD **ACTIVITY REPORT**
2020- **OBSERVATORY OF THE**
2023 **DIGITAL TRANSITION AND**
THE SINGLE MARKET

**DIRECTORATE C – LEGISLATIVE
WORK**

PRESIDENT: LOUISE GRABO

Introduction

Today, the Digital Single Market and the digital transition are closely linked. It is essential to support digital innovation, improve digital infrastructure, and ensure that the benefits of the digital transition are accessible to all EU citizens and businesses.

During my mandate, the Observatory has succeeded in collecting and analysing data on various aspects of the Digital Single Market and in monitoring the implementation of EU Digital Single Market legislation. Based on input and expertise from its members and other stakeholders, the Observatory should continue to address issues relating to the social and economic impact of the Digital Single Market, including its impact on employment, business and consumer protection.

Civil society's interests and perspectives need to be taken into account when developing EU policies and initiatives relating to the Digital Single Market, and the Observatory will continue to work towards this end.

Louise Grabo

President of the Observatory of
the Digital Transition and the Single Market

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Activities and main findings

The Observatory of the Digital Transition and the Single Market was set up in October 2020 to provide the EESC with a flexible, cross-cutting structure to monitor the development of the EU Digital Single Market, particularly in the selected priority areas of data governance, the GDPR, artificial intelligence, digital regulation, online platforms, and cybersecurity.

The Observatory held three meetings each year, which contributed to the preparation of the section's work by providing in-depth analyses to rapporteurs and other INT section members. Special attention was paid to the topic of artificial intelligence, an area in which the EESC has been very active since 2017. The meetings focused on, among other things, the use of AI in SMEs and the role of AI in relation to the COVID-19 crisis. The conclusions of the meetings also contributed to the section's work on the 2030 Digital Decade policy programme and on the European Data Strategy. Cybersecurity and consumer issues were also widely addressed.

The Observatory has set itself the objective of cooperating internally with other EESC sections and observatories. In this spirit, several meetings with the chairs of the Sustainable Development Observatory and the Labour Market Observatory were held, in order to prepare two joint events, which took place in 2021 and 2022: [Green, digital and social recovery – How the recovery plans are supporting a wellbeing economy for people and planet](#) and [Accelerating transitions to build open strategic autonomy for Europe](#). Both events contributed to the work of the INT, NAT and SOC sections and created a collective dynamic between the three EESC observatories.

Cooperation with other institutions was also one of the priorities of the Observatory. The Observatory has been in regular contact with the European Commission, in particular DG CNECT, as well as with the European Parliament. The European Parliament's Special Committee on Artificial Intelligence in the Digital Age was set up in 2020 and contact was established with the chair of the Committee, Dragoş Tudorache MEP, as well as with its secretariat. Mr Tudorache attended the meetings of the Observatory and the EESC president was also invited to the Special Committee's interparliamentary meeting on artificial intelligence and the digital decade. This cooperation led to the organisation of a joint conference entitled [AI stakeholder summit 2021](#). The [conclusions](#) of this event

were widely disseminated to the other EU institutions and stakeholders. A [podcast](#) on this topic was also recorded in the framework of this event.

In its next mandate, the Observatory will continue to analyse the functioning of the Digital Single Market, working to identify the difficulties and obstacles relating to the most recent crises that European society is facing. It will collect the positions of different stakeholders at a range of events, hearings and fact-finding missions. In-depth analyses and studies could also feed into the future work of the INT section. Cooperation, both internally at the EESC as well as with the other European institutions, will continue to remain a key priority among its activities.

Appendix I – List of meetings and events

	As of 29 October 2020	2021	2022	Until 25 April 2023	Total
PSG/Observatory meetings	1	3	3	1	8
Fact-finding missions					
Conferences and hearings organised by the PSG/Observatory		2	1		3