

Joint Statement: EU and Singapore agree to accelerate steps towards a comprehensive Digital Partnership

EU Commissioner Thierry Breton and Singapore Minister-in-charge of Trade Relations S Iswaran have agreed to accelerate steps towards a comprehensive and forward-looking Digital Partnership between the EU and Singapore. They reaffirmed their shared ambition to bring the robust and longstanding EU-Singapore relationship into the digital realm and expand bilateral digital cooperation and trade as likeminded partners.

The Digital Partnership is intended to provide an overarching framework to strengthen digital connectivity and interoperability of digital markets and policy frameworks and facilitate digital trade between the EU and Singapore. It aims to advance cooperation on the full spectrum of digital issues, including digital economy and trade, as well as key enablers for the successful digital transformation of our societies and economies. Issues that may be addressed include secure and sustainable digital infrastructure, trusted data flows and data innovation, digital regulations, the development of digital skills for workers, and the digital transformation of businesses, including small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and of public services. The Partnership would expand the bilateral trade and investment relationship by enhancing cooperation, building more resilient supply chains, and supporting values-based innovation and facilitating business opportunities for start-ups and SMEs.

In addition, the Digital Partnership will pave the way for cooperation in new and emerging areas with transformative economic potential - such as 5G/6G, Artificial Intelligence, or digital identities.

Commissioner Breton and Minister Iswaran stressed that the Digital Partnership should be a flexible structure that goes beyond dialogue and exchange of information to deliver concrete results. Ultimately, it should reinforce the people, business and trade links between the EU and Singapore and maximise the benefits of the digital economy for our communities. The Digital Partnership will also contribute to the development of a global architecture of interoperable standards at regional and multilateral settings and benefit workers and businesses engaging in digital trade and electronic commerce.

Commissioner Breton and Minister S. Iswaran underlined that there was a positive and growing momentum towards the EU-Singapore Digital Partnership. They agreed to launch technical workshops as soon as possible to further scope the content and processes of the Digital Partnership, in order to work towards a political agreement in 2022.

Once the Digital Partnership has been signed, an annual ministerial meeting (“Digital Partnership Council”), led by Commissioner Breton and Minister Iswaran, and where appropriate with participation of other relevant members of the College, will be convened to steer progress on shared priorities.

In addition, Commissioner Breton and Minister Iswaran also discussed the global supply

challenges in the semiconductor industry and the potential for cooperation between the EU and Singapore. Commissioner Breton outlined the priorities under the EU's recent proposal for an EU Chips Act and both sides agreed for their teams to further explore the issue in a technical workshop.