

To whom it may concern:

Very recently, we received the ESR and evaluation letters relative to the topic ICT-48-2020 “*Towards a vibrant European network of AI excellence centres*”. The text of the call clearly indicated that one of the pillars for the EU landscape as AI at the edge and Hardware for AI. I was coordinating a very strong proposal (A3I-NoE) with 43 partners that represented the top players in these topics that can be currently found in Europe.

When the results of the call were made public, it was a fact that the evaluation panel left out of the funding list any proposal focused on *AI at the edge and hardware for AI* and *Developing the next generation of intelligent robots*. This would be clearly in contrast with the Digital Strategy of the EC, in which Edge computing is prioritised and seen as an area where the EU can have a real impact. As **Thierry Breton recently mentioned** talking about the use of AI across Europe, “*Today, 80% of the data we generate is stored and managed in the cloud, in centralised servers. The rest, 20%, is generated and processed at the periphery – “at the Edge”: for instance, in connected vehicles or smartphones. By 2025, this proportion will be reversed. 80% of data will be generated and processed at the Edge, and only 20% in the cloud. By 2025, this proportion will be reversed. 80% of data will be generated and processed at the Edge, and only 20% in the cloud*”.

Some weeks later, we are in the middle of the **COVID19 crisis**, with **European networks almost saturated** by the high bandwidth demands that new remote work habits and people connecting to content services (i.e. Netflix, Prime Video, HBO), and with a growing demand to AI services to track the expansion of the virus through mobile devices and proximity networks.

It is a **paradox**, that while the Commission decided not to fund any proposals on the topic of *AI at the Edge and HW for AI*, now, **millions of European citizens** are locked down and **demanding new services to track virus expansion** that could take advantage of Edge Computing models, and mobile devices that can efficiently run AI technologies on low power processors.

AI has **many dimensions that go beyond foundations and algorithms**, and the Commission should learn from this experience and **huge lost opportunity** that **end-to-end technology sovereignty is critical**. Now, it is too late to redress the situation. Nonetheless, there are still future opportunities to improve the way in which **the boundaries of technologies, skills and profiles that conform the European AI ecosystem**.

In the future, it would be good if the Commission can get a broader view of the concept of AI, **instead of leaving behind different communities that provide expertise on technologies that, unfortunately, these days have proved to be critical for our society.**

Sincerely yours,

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