A European strategy for data

Over the last few years, digital technologies have transformed the economy and society, affecting all sectors of activity and the daily lives of all Europeans. Data is at the centre of this transformation and more is to come. Data-driven innovation will bring enormous benefits for citizens, for example through improved personalised medicine, new mobility and through its contribution to the European Green Deal. In a society where individuals will generate everincreasing amounts of data, the way in which the data are collected and used must place the interests of the individual first, in accordance with European values, fundamental rights and rules. Citizens will trust and embrace data-driven innovations only if they are confident that any personal data sharing in the European Union (EU) will be subject to full compliance with the EU's strict data protection rules. At the same time, the increasing volume of non-personal industrial data and public data in Europe, combined with technological change in how the data is stored and processed, will constitute a potential source of growth and innovation that should be tapped. Citizens should be empowered to make better decisions based on insights gleaned from nonpersonal data. And that data should be available to all – whether public or private, big or small, start-up or giant. This will help society to get the most out of innovation and competition and ensure that everyone benefits from a digital dividend. This digital Europe should reflect the best of Europe - open, fair, diverse, democratic, and confident. The EU can become a leading role model for a society empowered by data to make better decisions – in business and the public sector. To fulfil this ambition, the EU can build on a strong legal framework – in terms of data protection, fundamental rights, safety and cybersecurity – and its internal market with competitive companies of all sizes and varied industrial base. If the EU is to acquire a leading role in the data economy, it has to act now and tackle, in a concerted manner, issues ranging from connectivity to processing and storage of data, computing power and cybersecurity. Moreover, it will have to improve its governance structures for handling data and to increase its pools of quality data available for use and reuse. Ultimately, Europe aims to capture the benefits of better use of data, including greater productivity and competitive markets, but also improvements in health and well-being, environment, transparent governance and convenient public services.