



EUROPEAN CENTER FOR  
DIGITAL COMPETITIVENESS

BY ESCP BUSINESS SCHOOL

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## PRESS RELEASE

### **Despite digital acceleration brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic, future technologies remain a low priority for European leaders**

**Future technologies remain a low priority for European heads of state and government. This is one of the main results of the Digital Engagement Report 2021, which has been published by the European Center for Digital Competitiveness by ESCP Business School today. The objective of the Digital Engagement Report is to highlight the importance of heads of state and government in the digital transformation of their countries, as well as to investigate what digitalisation topics they are engaged in. The Digital Engagement Report 2021 provides an in-depth analysis of all 27 European nations' digital focus areas based on a variety of publicly accessible information from governments, press releases and personal accounts on the social media platform Twitter.**

The year 2020 was characterised by the Covid-19 crisis, but the digital priorities of European heads of state and government shifted only slightly in reaction to it. Compared to our 2019 analysis, topics around e-government and digital education, which were crucial for solving the crisis, received very little additional attention. Most emphasis was placed on digital infrastructure topics such as industry 4.0 and 5G. At the same time, future technologies, such as quantum computing and robotics, were largely disregarded by most European leaders.

Moreover, our analysis shows that European heads of state and government approach digitisation very differently. In 2020, Estonia, Germany, France, Greece and Croatia were most engaged, while Slovenia, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Lithuania and Hungary were the least so. For instance, Estonia's Jüri Ratas had over six times more engagements with digitisation than Slovakia's Igor Matovič, Lithuania's Ingrida Šimonytė or Hungary's Viktor Orbán.

### **Future technologies need to become a priority throughout Europe**

"Although the Covid-19 pandemic has strongly accelerated digital transformation in the last year, important future technologies are still not a priority in Europe," says **Professor Philip Meissner** of the European Center for Digital Competitiveness by ESCP Business School.

"This has to change," Prof. Meissner adds. "Europe's future wealth will be determined by its competitiveness in the technologies of the future. When it comes to chip technologies, for example,

we already see today what significant negative effects a lack of such capabilities can have. We finally need large-scale investments in digital future technologies such as quantum computing and robotics.”

### **European heads of state and government focused on digital infrastructure**

In the last year, industry 4.0 and 5G had the most digital engagements (103 and 64, respectively) – a trend reflected in digital engagements by the leaders of Europe’s two biggest economies: Angela Merkel had the most digital engagements with regards to 5G, while Emmanuel Macron put industry 4.0 in the spotlight.

Future digital technologies, conversely, were largely disregarded. Across all European states, quantum computing had nine engagements, while robotics had four, amounting to merely two and one per cent of all engagements, respectively.

### **Besides future technologies, leaders also largely neglected entrepreneurship and digital education**

“The last year has shown that digital future technologies are key factors in solving our most pressing problems, such as dealing with pandemics, preserving our digital sovereignty and tackling climate change,” says **Dr. Christian Poensgen** of the European Center for Digital Competitiveness by ESCP Business School. However, crucial areas in this regard, such as entrepreneurship (38 engagements) and digital education (34 engagements), remain a low priority for European heads of state and government.

### **About the Digital Engagement Report 2021**

The Digital Engagement Report is based on a Digital Engagement Index, which tracks all interactions of heads of state and government around the topic of digitalisation in the year 2020. The index is compiled from a variety of publicly accessible information provided by governments, press releases, and personal accounts on the social media platform Twitter. These digital engagements are then classified according to the type of interaction (conferences, private sector meetings, political meetings and press conferences) and the topic discussed (industry 4.0, 5G, cybersecurity, e-government, entrepreneurship, artificial intelligence, digital education, mobility, cloud computing, quantum computing and robotics).

A summary of the Digital Engagement Report, as well as detailed engagement profiles for each European head of state or government, is available at

[www.digital-competitiveness.eu/digitalengagement](http://www.digital-competitiveness.eu/digitalengagement)

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### **About the European Center for Digital Competitiveness by ESCP Business School**

The European Center for Digital Competitiveness was founded at ESCP Business School in Berlin with the goal of bringing digital competitiveness to the political and public debate, where it currently only plays a minor role. Given the digital revolution that our economy and society currently face, digital competitiveness must take center stage in debates to secure our prosperity for the future. Similarly, in this increasingly dynamic environment, we want to support the initiative to position Europe as a global leader for the responsible application of technology for the benefit of society.

### **About ESCP Business School**

ESCP Business School was founded in 1819. The School has chosen to teach responsible leadership, open to the world and based on European multiculturalism. Six campuses in Berlin, London, Madrid, Paris, Turin and Warsaw are the stepping stones that allow students to experience this European approach to management.

Several generations of entrepreneurs and managers were thus trained in the firm belief that the business world may feed society in a positive way.

This conviction and ESCP's values - excellence, singularity, creativity and plurality - daily guide our mission and build its pedagogical vision.

Every year, ESCP welcomes 7100 students and 5000 managers from 120 different nationalities. Its strength lies in its many business training programmes, both general and specialised (Bachelor, Master, MBA, Executive MBA, PhD and Executive Education), all of which include a multi-campus experience.

**It all starts here.**

Website: [www.escp.eu](http://www.escp.eu)

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