



## Decalogue

### Upholding the EU's Digital and Economic Agenda. Spain's Strategic Leadership

Europe is at a crossroads. Competitiveness, security, and the potential for high-scale innovation can no longer be competing agendas: they are linked. In order to emerge as a world leader in the digital economy, Europe must integrate technological growth and uptake, targeted regulatory simplification, investment clout, and global openness.

The Spanish ecosystem is well placed to shape that future. With strong digital power, entrepreneurial energy, and international interconnection, the Spanish ecosystem is well placed to push forward the European Union's competitiveness, innovation, and strategic autonomy agenda. Spain's digital ecosystem — from high-level large companies to SMEs and startups and scaleups as potential unicorns, to bridging Europe, Latin America, and Africa — presents the Union with tangible assets to make its global ambition possible.

This Decalogue offers ten objectives, advocated by the Spanish ecosystem, directly aimed at advancing the economic and digital agenda of the EU. They are well-balanced, realistic, and future-oriented proposals to boost European tech champions, with policy creativity, investment mobilization, while keeping international cooperation.

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## 1. Balance competition policy and facilitate scale in strategic sectors

Competition policy must ensure a level playing field, while also enabling EU strategic companies to reach the scale required to compete internationally in an increasingly challenging scenario. There is a need for a balanced strategy that fosters business diversity while supporting growth in sectors where Europe needs world champions. This requires simplified merger control for strategic technologies as well as fair access conditions for SMEs to digital platforms.

## 2. Leadership in critical deep technologies

Europe's future competitiveness depends on leadership in pioneering deep technologies such as artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and semiconductors. Spain contributes its nascent industrial and research base, showing how scientific excellence can be transformed into deployment and commercialization. Industrial concentrations need to mesh research, capital, and enterprise; and pilot plants in semiconductors and quantum need to be scaled up to translate innovation into economic value. There is a need for greater public-private dialogue on the European Commission's proposal for the European preference scheme.

## 3. Cybersecurity as a foundation of competitiveness

Cybersecurity is not an add-on but a foundation for competitiveness. Trust in digital services and infrastructures requires coordinated certification regimes, cross-border incident-response networks, and intelligence-exchange hubs for public and private actors. Cyber-risk assessments need to be an integral part of all strategic investments to build up resilience and protect Europe's vital assets.

## 4. Boost scaleups to become European champions

Europe is full of entrepreneurial talent but few of its start-ups succeed at scale. Spain shows how ecosystems can provide successful scaleups and Europe needs to make it under the conditions to enable more companies to grow at home. Incentives for harmonizing fiscal policies, cross-border venture capital system, streamlined listing processes, and pan-European investment products are the keys to unlocking small firms as global champions. Adigital's proposal for a National Plan on Scalability, with the collaboration from ICEX (Ministry of Economy) and BME (Spanish stock exchange), should be an inspiring scalable initiative across the EU.

## 5. Digitalization of strategic sectors

Previous domains such as payments, insurance, and banking are critical to competitiveness and integration. Spanish fintech excellence proves the potential for transformation of the sector. Europe must accelerate digital identity, data- and AI-driven innovation, and instant payments based on interoperable standards and cross-border sandboxes. Public and private investment blended programs must offer a robust, secure environment for businesses and customers.

## 6. Connectivity as driver for strategic autonomy

Resilient connectivity is a driver for Europe's strategic autonomy. Being a crossroads of submarine cables and high-capacity networks for Spain, it is an example of how important resilient infrastructure is. Europe needs to invest in 5G and 6G corridors, submarine cables, and data centers. The resilience of these infrastructures will safeguard Europe's economy and society from disruption and exposure to vulnerabilities.

## 7. Mobilise and align investments for strategic impact

Europe has powerful financial instruments — ETCI 2.0, the initiative TechEU from the European Investment Bank Group, and the European Innovation Council — and has included a new European Competitiveness Fund under the Multiannual Financial Framework 2028-2034 proposal. These initiatives must operate together, with coordinated governance and shared goals. Public support serves as “patient capital investor”, and institutional investors such as venture capital, pension schemes and insurance companies must be incentivized to participate. Capital flowing must take place where it is needed most: high-growth sectors and critical technologies.

## 8. Simplify regulation and unlock the Digital Single Market

Regulatory fragmentation is Europe's greatest obstacle to scale. The Spanish private ecosystem has driven a proposal for regulatory simplification and streamlining as a means of creating a responsive and effective digital space. It is essential to develop a balanced approach that guarantees both the protection of European values and the operational viability of innovative business models. It is also important to include the “economic and innovation objective” in Article 1 of digital legislation. Regulatory simplification should not be understood as deregulation or a rollback in the protection of fundamental values. On the contrary, it is about making regulatory compliance more efficient, eliminating redundancies, contradictions, and disproportionate requirements that do not add real value to the objectives pursued. Regulatory simplification leads to greater levels of consumer protection, investor confidence, and the sustainability of our welfare public services. Duplicative certifications must be dispensed with, interoperability required, and single-stop shops on an EU-wide basis established so that cross-border activity can work more smoothly. Regulation must be open, light-touch where possible, and growth-promoting and integrating among Member States.

## 9. Leverage the private sector to boost international technology partnerships

Europe's competitiveness is also based on international alliances. Spain, located in a favorable position, is positioned as a bridge between Europe, Latin America, America, and Africa to facilitate economic collaboration in the digital world. Europe needs to increase cooperation with collaborative R&D ecosystems, access to technology, and mutual recognition of standards while creating talent mobility programs. These alliances fuel supply chains, open markets, and make Europe a reliable partner to build global digital ecosystems. Also, the private sector brings rigorous ideas to contribute to the EU's International Digital Strategy proposal for an EU Tech Business Offer abroad.

## 10. Work towards the expansion of the European Competitiveness Laboratory

Ambition must be brought to life. Spain has proposed the creation of a European Competitiveness Laboratory: a continuous platform to bring together public administrations and industry, pilot cross-border initiatives, and try out new economic instruments with the aim of increasing the EU's competitiveness. EU Member States and its stakeholders should support this proposal to ensure digital policy goals are achieved, ensuring that funding decisions are aligned with strategic goals and deliver measurable results.

These ten objectives provide Europe with a blueprint to move quickly, balancing innovation, security, investment, and integration to solidify its position as a global digital economy leader. The Spanish ecosystem is equipped, ready, and capable to keep contributing to this endeavour.