Armenia
Azerbaijan
Belarus
Georgia
Republic of Moldova
Ukraine

# EU4Digital Facility

# Bi-annual Report No.5

Reporting period: January 2021 – June 2021
Date of report: 16 July 2021

**EU4Digital**

**EY**
Building a better
working world

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# List of Acronyms & Abbreviations

| Abbreviations | Definition |
|---|---|
| **AM** | Armenia |
| **AZ** | Azerbaijan |
| **BY** | Belarus |
| **EaP** | Eastern Partnership |
| **Facility, EU4Digital Facility** | EU4Digital: supporting digital economy and society in the Eastern Partnership |
| **GE** | Georgia |
| **MD** | Republic of Moldova |
| **UA** | Ukraine |

# 1 Introduction

This report reflects the activities of the fifth reporting period of the EU4Digital Facility (hereinafter - EU4Digital): 1 January 2021 - 30 June 2021. The report summarises the outputs achieved under the six thematic streams during the reporting period. Also, it outlines the objectives for the upcoming six-month reporting period, including events planned which are known at the time of preparing this report. In this report, we provide the main political highlights and operational challenges encountered and the mitigation measures applied or suggested for the upcoming period. Finally, the report Annexes provide a summary of outputs, updated workplan, the summary of administrative matters concerning the reporting period and monitoring of the logframe indicators.

# 2 Political Summary

The EU4Digital Facility is the core programme of the EU4Digital Initiative. Launched in 2019, the EU4Digital Facility focuses on enabling a stronger economy and stronger governance in the Eastern partner countries through digital transformation. Its purpose is twofold: to promote key areas of the digital economy and society in the Eastern Partnership region, in line with EU norms and best practices, and to establish EU4Digital as a recognised and well-communicated brand. Under the guidance of DG NEAR, this involves working in close cooperation with a wide range of stakeholders, including the EU4Digital networks, thematic experts, country coordinators, EU Delegations, European Commission DGs and other European Union and global organisations.

## Context

Resilient digital transformation is high on the EU's external action agenda. It was identified as one of the five priorities to drive sustainable growth for both the EU and the Eastern partner countries in the **Joint Communication on the Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020,** issued in March 2020 by the European Commission and the High Representative for the Union on Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and confirmed in the **Post-2020 Eastern Partnership priorities** released on 2 July, 2021, ahead of the 6th Eastern Partnership Summit in December. The agenda is underpinned by a €2.3 billion Economic and Investment plan in grants, blending and guarantees, with a potential to mobilise up to €17 billion in public and private investments.

The latest document sets out the EU's **top ten targets** for the EaP, one of which is for at least 80% of households to have access to affordable high-speed internet by 2025.

Additional digital targets for 2025 are set in the areas of international roaming, secure 5G networks, e-Governance, Digital economy and innovation, and Cyber resilience and cybersecurity. In addition, digital transformation is present throughout other priority areas, such as supporting SMEs to pursue the digital transition, supporting the digitalisation of education and training, as well as digital skills for young people, investing in Research and Innovation, and support for digital tools and e-health services.

Backing the EU's commitment to the digital transition, the Economic and Investment Plan will mobilise potential investments of up to €1.5 billion to develop and upgrade broadband internet infrastructure (optic fibre, mobile systems), in particular in remote and rural areas, to reduce the in-country digital divide. The EU will also support the development of ecosystems for digital services.

Through the Digital Innovation and Scale Up Initiative (DISC), investments will be made in order to stimulate digital innovation and high performance digital start-ups and contribute to the creation of related high-quality jobs. The DISC will also strengthen the EaP ecosystem for nurturing start-ups and improving access to finance capacity.

The proposals will be discussed with partner countries, EU Member states, civil society and other key stakeholders in view of the Eastern Partnership Summit in December 2021.

## Political Highlights

In the past six months, more and more EU4Digital Facility activities have been producing tangible results, which are generating high interest among EU, EaP and international audiences. With this level of maturity of the activities, the Facility has been focused on **proactive participation and promotion of progress made** among different EU and Eastern partner country audiences, while continuing the work in the thematic areas to support the digital transformation in the EaP. These forums included meetings with European stakeholders, such as the EU Delegations and DG NEAR's ECO-NET event (a virtual seminar for the EU Delegations, at which EU4Digital contributed on the topics of Digitalisation and e-commerce, as well as support for start-ups), but also discussions with international organisations on closer collaboration, including with the World Bank, OECD, UNECE and UNDP.

One key aspect of sustainable digital transformation involves the **actors on the national level** who can further contribute to, consolidate and adopt the tangible EU4Digital results and frameworks created. For this, the Facility is working to build synergies with local EU Delegations and country stakeholders, to not only raise awareness, but also to achieve the maximum potential impact by aligning the activities to the local reality and the plans of the EU Delegations. This attention to sharing results and building awareness of the wider impact of EU4Digital will continue into the next period as further results are finalised.

The Regional Roaming Agreement (RRA) and the Regional Spectrum Agreement (RSA) are two important elements for achieving **regional harmonisation of telecommunications** in the region. The current political situation in some countries has cast some uncertainty over the signing of these milestone documents, tentatively planned to be linked to the high-level regional meeting at the end of the year. EU4Digital will monitor the situation and support with adaptations where needed. In addition, the EaP-EU roaming study looking at the feasibility of a common international roaming space between the Eastern partner countries and the EU will further support this telecom pillar of digital transformation.

The newest activity on eGovernance will play an important role in supporting public administration reforms in the countries by identifying underlying conditions to be developed or improved through digital opportunities. EU4Digital has developed a framework for eGovernance development which is planned to be closely aligned and even to provide inputs to DG NEAR's approach to public administration reforms. Global recognition was also received by the eGovernance framework through EU4Digital's collaboration with the OECD, which will potentially allow the activity results to have a wider reach beyond the Facility and the EaP.

In terms of **tangible digital trust services for the countries**, the eSignature technical pilots have been completed between Ukraine and Moldova and between Ukraine and Estonia. Through the recommendations issued, the aim is to enable the countries to achieve the next level or readiness towards mutual recognition of eSignature from the legal and technical perspective. In order to empower both pilot and non-pilot countries, EU4Digital developed country-specific action plans for 'Cross-border mutual recognition of trust services and eIDs' for all Eastern partner countries, and is in the alignment process with the Eastern partner countries. In terms of the wider trust services ecosystem, a proposal to amend the eIDAS Regulation was adopted by the European Commission in June, which proposes a framework for European Digital Identity to support the Digital Single Market and by offering a unified framework reduces obstacles to the cross-border mutual recognition of trust services in Eastern partnership region.

Further, EU4Digital cross-border pilots are **enabling digital solutions to facilitate cross-border eTrade** in the EaP. The eDelivery pilots between Armenia and Ukraine and between Poland and Ukraine were successfully concluded, with the participating companies able to exchange electronic invoice data to demonstrate the paperless exchange of information. In the eCustoms technical pilot, the different scenarios on exchanging export declarations and data on empty trucks are facilitating a quicker passage through border points through the digital exchange of customs information. The eCommerce pilot to establish national virtual warehouses is a further technical pilot that is using digital tools to eliminate barriers and boost eCommerce between the EU and EaP, as well as within the region. This is especially relevant for increasing SME competitiveness and creating new market opportunities. All of these technical pilots aim to generate results and conclusions that can be shared more widely for the future larger scale application and interoperability of the digital solutions.

With a focus on **supporting digital start-ups and scale-ups**, the EaP DISC Capital funding instrument is in its final phases of identifying a funding partner, as the discussion and negotiations are being held with potential investors as well as potential owners of the EaP DISC Capital funding facility. This regional venture fund will aim to support more than 1,500 ICT start-ups from idea to early growth stages, and generate more than 250 scale-ups in the region. It seeks to boost the ICT ecosystem in the region and fill the current gaps in seed and early stage start-up development.

Digital technologies can help support women's empowerment and reduce the digital divide[1]. In the last period, as part of the Women in Tech activity, EU Delegations in the six Eastern partner countries were consulted on potential opportunities and on the ways to implement the women mentorship programmes to empower more women to get involved with ICT and shift their professional path to work in the sector.

Despite ongoing physical restrictions and additional difficulties brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, EU4Digital has **continued to successfully engage the networks and stakeholders** in the EU and EaP through a number of virtual events. In the area of ICT innovation, the six virtual networking events on policy areas such as intellectual property rights management, digital transformation of SMEs in traditional sectors, selected by the Eastern partner countries, attracted a wealth of participants and organisations from across the EaP and EU. Acting as a centre for knowledge and sharing of best practices, the EU4Digital events provided the opportunity

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[1] As referenced in the EU Gender Action Plan III, JOIN(2020) 17, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_20_2184

to share potential collaboration opportunities and establish partnership, as well as further communicate the EU4Digital brand as a gateway for collaboration between organisations from the EaP and the EU.

EU4Digital has also played a role during the COVID-19 situation by **organising timely and up to date discussions** with stakeholders about the pandemic and EU best practices. Through the 'COVID-19 pandemic response measures enabled by eHealth solutions' event, EU4Digital facilitated cross-stakeholder collaboration as countries were able to hear about the EU digital certificates and discuss how these could be applied to the EaP region. Meanwhile, the online EU4Digital eHealth collaboration portal provides a constant space for further discussions among stakeholders.

To strengthen the digital skills capabilities in the countries, the national jobs and skills coalitions are in preparation, with Moldova and Georgia involved in discussions and preparations with support from the Facility. These activities are an example of the **sharing of EU best practices and norms**, and how this could be used to support the Eastern partner countries to equip citizens with the digital skills and digital literacy needed to successfully take part in a digital society. A further important aspect is producing measurements in line with EU norms for the results achieved, to be able to monitor progress through methodologies and frameworks.

With a similar focus on supporting the development and upskilling of businesses and entrepreneurs, the EdTech Hub educational programme concept is being developed by EU4Digital. The programme aims to provide learning and development opportunities as well as digital badges on digital topics such data & cloud, web and mobile software development, business and innovation management, marketing via digital technologies and others to upskill employees and increase competitiveness of SMEs in the Eastern partner countries.

In addition to the thematic-specific activities, **communication and monitoring have been essential activities** throughout the project to share accurate results and progress with stakeholders and promote the EU4Digital brand. At this point in the project, the audience for both the EU4Digital website and newsletter subscriptions continue to grow, with more people interested in finding out about the initiative through the articles, news and feature stories content created. Two regional social media campaigns on eHealth and Telecom Rules were developed during this last period and together reached over 5.4 million people on social media, and hundreds of thousands more via the media outreach efforts for these campaigns.

*EU4Digital - objective, purpose and expected results*

| I. OVERALL PROJECT OBJECTIVE |
| --- |
| The overall objective of the project is to eliminate existing obstacles and barriers for pan-European online services for citizens, both women and men, public administrations and businesses, including through the harmonisation of the digital environments among the EaP partner countries and with the EU. <br><br> The geographical scope includes the Eastern Partnership countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. |

| II. PROJECT PURPOSE |
| --- |
| 1. Promote key areas of the digital economy and society in the EaP region, in line with EU norms and best practices. <br> 2. Establish EU4Digital as a recognised and well communicated brand, encompassing EU support to the digital economy and society in the EaP region and providing links to other complementary activities by the Eastern partner countries, EU Member States, IFIs and other donors. |

| III. RESULTS | |
| --- | --- |
| Result 1 | Legislative and regulatory framework conditions for the digital economy and society improved, and key enablers for electronic services in place, including implemented policy recommendations and piloted cross-border eServices for businesses and citizens in the following areas: Telecom Rules, Trust and Security, eTrade, ICT innovation, eHealth, eSkills |
| Result 2 | EU4Digital brand established, visible and recognised as the reference for EU cooperation on the digital economy and society in the EaP |

| IV. PROJECT RESULTS IN THE THEMATIC AREAS | |
|---|---|
| Telecom Rules | 1. International agreement on a common roaming space among the Eastern partner countries.<br>2. Strengthened independence of National Regulatory Authorities (NRAs) for electronic communications in all 6 Eastern partner countries.<br>3. Well-coordinated frequency distribution strategies among the Eastern partner countries and with the EU. |
| Trust and Security | 1. Piloted interoperable cross-border eSignature and established regional framework for cross-border eServices for businesses, in the EaP region.<br>2. Preparatory work completed for the design and implementation of cyber-security strategies in the EaP region, based on EU experiences. |
| eTrade | 1. Better harmonised national legal frameworks for eTrade, including eCommerce and eCustoms, among the Eastern partner countries and with the EU.<br>2. Piloted cross-border eTrade services among Eastern partner countries and with the EU. |
| ICT innovation | Legislative and regulatory reforms, relevant ICT infrastructures and best practices, favouring the development of ICT research, start-ups & innovation ecosystems in the EaP region, in line with EU norms, established. |
| eHealth | Better harmonised national legal frameworks for eHealth, among Eastern partner countries and with the EU. |
| Digital Skills | Common methodology for designing digital skills strategies; and common competence framework for SMEs and microbusinesses in the EaP region established. |

# 3 Programme state of play & planning of activities

This chapter covers the main EU4Digital Facility results achieved and a short description of the related activities under the six sub-streams and the Communication stream during the reporting period (January 2021 – June 2021). Likewise, under each thematic sub-stream (where applicable), key highlights in the six Eastern partner countries are provided. Additionally, the report provides planning for the upcoming six-month period under each sub-stream.

## 3.1 Telecom Rules

### State of play

### Roaming

In the context of establishing a **common roaming space between the six Eastern partner countries**, EU4Digital has been supporting the formal national approval procedures and discussions regarding the **Regional Roaming Agreement (RRA)**. It is expected that outstanding questions will be addressed, and all Eastern partner countries that are willing to join a common roaming space will obtain the required mandate to sign the RRA and finalise the national approval procedures in September. The official RRA signing ceremony is planned to be linked to the high-level regional meeting (potentially in December 2021).

Additionally, EU4Digital continued the preparation of a feasibility study on establishing a **common international roaming space between the Eastern partner countries and the EU Member States**. In May, EU4Digital finalised the legal analysis and concluded the legally feasible options for the EaP-EU roaming arrangement. The key conclusion of the assessment is that it would require an internal market treatment or actual accession to the EU to enable a common roaming space, and since the EaP is not a body under international law, the process would need to take place separately between each Eastern partner country and the EU. At the current stage, EU4Digital continues to work on the economic impact assessment of implementing such a roaming agreement, and has launched the required data collection exercise from mobile network operators in all six Eastern partner countries and the EU Member States.

**Key outputs:**

- Finished the legal feasibility assessment of EU-EaP roaming arrangement (full study to be finalised by the end of 2021).

**Country perspective**

The table below presents the current status regarding the formal national approval procedures on the RRA per each Eastern partner country, and conclusions in terms of legally feasible options for the EaP-EU roaming arrangement.

| Country | Highlights |
|---------|-----------|
| AM | - **RRA**: national alignment process ongoing and the political will to enter into the RRA has been signalled. Due to recent changes in government, the previous established co-operation framework with specific personnel had to be rebuilt.<br>- **EaP-EU**: AM may enter into a roaming deal with the EU due to the existing Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA), the deal shall contain either internal market treatment from the EU side or joining the EU. |
| AZ | - **RRA:** the national consultation process for alignment is ongoing with strong pollical support signalled. The outstanding question from AZ side is related to depository for agreement and it has now been addressed via the RRA through an adjustment made.<br>- **EaP-EU**: AZ currently has the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the EU, which does not allow to enter a roaming deal. If amended, the deal shall contain either internal market treatment from the EU side or joining the EU. In order to make it possible for AZ to enter a roaming arrangement with the EU, it is recommended to sign the Facilitated market level arrangement. |
| BY | - **RRA**: the draft RRA is undergoing national consultation initiated by the Ministry of Communications and Informatization with the Ministry of Antimonopoly Regulation and Trade, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Economy as well as market participants. A series of questions has been raised to the EU4Digital Facility and feedback has been provided.<br>- **EaP-EU:** BY currently has no bilateral agreements covering either electronic communications and / or international roaming services with the EU. If enacted, the deal shall contain either internal market treatment from the EU side or joining the EU. In order to make it possible for BY to enter a roaming arrangement with the EU, it is recommended to sign the Facilitated market level arrangement. |
| GE | - **RRA**: confirmation signalling readiness to sign has been received. Situation would still have to be monitored as national consultations may be relaunched due to changes to the RRA introduced as a result of proposals from other Eastern partner countries.<br>- **EaP-EU:** GE may enter a roaming deal with the EU due to the existing Association Agreement (AA) setting up the deep and comprehensive free trade area (DCFTA) with the EU. For this to happen, however, the deal shall contain either internal market treatment from the EU side or joining the EU. |
| MD | - **RRA:** the formal alignment with the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is ongoing, and the received inputs have been covered by the latest version of the RRA.<br>- **EaP-EU:** MD may enter a roaming deal with the EU due to the existing AA setting up the DCFTA with the EU. For this to happen, however, the deal shall contain either internal market treatment from the EU side or joining the EU. |
| UA | - **RRA:** the formal alignment is ongoing with Ministry of Digital Transformation and Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A series of questions has been raised and explained by the EU4Digital Facility and covered by the latest version of the RRA.<br>- **EaP-EU:** UA may enter a roaming deal with the EU due to the existing AA setting up the DCFTA with the EU. For this to happen, internal market treatment from the EU side is already included in the AA, and another option for UA would be to join the EU. |

**Regulators' independence**

EU4Digital has progressed towards the end-phase in its activities related to **strengthening the organisational and financial independence of national regulatory authorities (NRAs)** for electronic communications in the Eastern partner countries. EU4Digital, jointly with the Eastern Partnership Electronic Communications

Regulators Network (EaPeReg), has prepared the model law on electronic communications based on the EU regulatory framework[2]. Once this model law is aligned among Eastern partner countries, it will be used as a basis for drafting country-specific legislation in order to harmonise the national regulatory frameworks among the Eastern partner countries and the EU.

Also, following a regional workshop with key stakeholders on regulatory independence and broadband in April, it was decided to **establish a mechanism and tools to comprehensively monitor internet service availability** in the Eastern partner countries. Thus, EU4Digital will prepare a methodology, which could serve as a tool for harmonised assessment of state-of-play in broadband connectivity.

**Key outputs:**

- Model law on electronic communications based on the EU regulatory framework.

**Country perspective**

On a per country basis, a series of bilateral meetings have taken place detailing the model law and the specific provisions contained therein, and proposals from Eastern partner countries have been taken into account with the final version of the document. The table below presents the current status of model law alignment per each Eastern partner country.

| Country | Highlights |
|---------|-----------|
| AM | • The model law on electronic communications has been shared with the Public Services Regulatory Commission (PSRC) and feedback has been provided to the PSRC comments/questions.<br>• AM specific draft legislation to be prepared following the bilateral alignment. |
| AZ | • The model law on electronic communications has been shared with the Ministry of Transport, Communications and High Technologies and due to personnel changes feedback is pending. |
| BY | • The model law on electronic communications has been shared with the Ministry of Communications and Informatization and feedback is pending. |
| GE | • The model law on electronic communications has been shared with the Georgian National Communications Commission (ComCom) and feedback has been provided to the ComCom comments/questions.<br>• GE specific draft legislation to be prepared following the bilateral alignment. |
| MD | • The model law on electronic communications has been shared with the National Regulatory Agency for Electronic Communications and Information Technology (ANRCETI) and feedback has been provided to the ANRCETI comments/questions.<br>• MD specific draft legislation to be prepared following the bilateral alignment. |
| UA | • The model law on electronic communications has been shared with the National Commission for the State Regulation of Communications and Informatization (NCCIR) and feedback has been provided to the NCCIR comments/questions.<br>• UA specific draft legislation to be prepared following the bilateral alignment. |

**Freeing 700 MHz**

EU4Digital continued to support a coordinated approach for **reassigning the 700 MHz frequency band** in the six Eastern partner countries by supporting regional negotiations towards the alignment on a final version of the **Regional Spectrum Agreement (RSA)**. The draft RSA was submitted for formal national approval procedures and discussion are actively ongoing in five countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia and Moldova), whereas necessary internal procedures have not yet been launched in Ukraine. The official RSA signing ceremony is planned to be linked to the high-level regional meeting (potentially in December 2021).

Additionally, EU4Digital continued to **support the Spectrum expert working group (SEWG) with their**

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[2] EU 2002/2009 electronic communications regulatory framework is part of the 'Telecoms Package', adopted in 2002 and amended in 2009 to take account of the rapid development of the sector. This package includes four Directives which regulate specific aspects of electronic communications, as well as two Regulations.

**agenda, specifically focusing on 5G launch in the partner countries**.

**Key outputs:**

- Technical assistance provided (including on-demand consultations for SEWG, e.g. EU4Digital reviewed the '5G Terms and Conditions' for 5G auction in Georgia and provided feedback, etc.).

**Country perspective**

The table below presents the current status regarding the formal national approval procedures on the RSA per each Eastern partner country.

| Country | Highlights |
|---------|------------|
| AM | • RSA was adopted by the Radio Spectrum Management Coordination Commission and internal procedure to get the authorisation of the Government for the signature has been launched. |
| AZ | • National approval procedures have been launched, feedback from stakeholders received and reflected in the updated version of the draft RSA. |
| BY | • RSA does not have the status of an international treaty and the leadership of the Ministry of Communications and Informatization of the Republic of Belarus has the authority to sign it. |
| GE | • National approval procedures have been launched and the RSA has been submitted to the Government to get the authorization to sign. Feedback from the Ministry of Justice received and reflected in the updated version of the draft RSA. |
| MD | • Necessary national approval procedures have been launched. Feedback from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs received and reflected in the updated version of the draft RSA.<br>• Further, the Government decision on the official approval of signing of the RSA can be issued by the new Government to be formed after the parliamentary elections. |
| UA | • National approval procedures have not yet been launched. |

### Planning for the upcoming six months

**Roaming – key objectives:**

- Support national approval procedures in order to finalise the RRA text (signing ceremony is planned in December 2021).
- Finalise economic impact assessment of implementing a roaming agreement between the Eastern partner countries and the EU Member States

**Regulators' independence – key objectives:**

- Develop a methodology for the harmonised assessment of broadband connectivity in the Eastern partner countries.
- Develop country specific action plans to strengthen regulatory independence.
- Provide technical assistance aimed at bridging the gaps identified and implementation of recommendations (preparation of legislation, stakeholder events, etc.).

**Freeing 700 MHz – key objectives:**

- Provide periodic technical assistance, including support in the preparation and implementation of RSA (signing ceremony is planned in December 2021).

## 3.2  Trust and Security

### State of play

**eID and eSignature**

> **About.** The eSignature pilot aimed to test the cross-border eSignature technical operation in selected Eastern partner countries. During the pilot, the testing of a qualified electronic signature solution compatible with eIDAS Regulation requirements took place.

> **Pilot countries.** The eSignature pilot was performed between Ukraine and Estonia (EaP – EU), and Ukraine and Moldova (inter- EaP).
>
> **Scope.** The eSignature pilot included the timestamping, validation mechanisms and the certificate status checking components which are deployed to enable the cross-border mutual recognition of qualified electronic signatures (digital signatures).

EU4Digital finished the eSignature pilot between Ukraine and Estonia (EaP – EU), and between Ukraine and Moldova (inter- EaP). As a result of the pilots, Ukraine has an eIDAS-compatible solution to create digital signatures, while Moldova has the solution in testing environment and after the pilot could move it into production. Following the achievement of technical compatibility, both countries should also achieve legal/regulatory compatibility, which requires political decisions on eIDAS Article 14 which stipulates that the third country should ask and get recognition by the European Commission on trust services' legal equivalence. Following the successful results of the EU4Digital eSignature pilot, EU4Digital issued a recommendations package for Ukraine and Moldova to achieve the next level of readiness towards mutual recognition of eSignature from legal and technical perspectives. In order to empower both pilot and non-pilot countries, EU4Digital developed and is in the process of aligning country-specific action plans for 'Cross-border mutual recognition of trust services and eIDs' with all Eastern partner countries.

**Key outputs:**

- eSignature pilot report providing recommendations to pilot countries.

**Country perspective**

In order to close identified gaps and to achieve cross-border mutual recognition between the Eastern partner countries and EU member states, EU4Digital prepared a number of recommendations and roadmap. The table below presents the key recommendations for all Eastern partner countries to achieve cross-border mutual recognition of trust services based on the process described in the mutual recognition cookbook ('Mutual recognition agreement Cookbook'[3]). Further, to achieve mutual recognition, all Eastern partner countries should focus to ensure regulatory compatibility with the eIDAS requirements; audit and conformity assessment compatibility with the eIDAS requirements; technical measures compatibility with the eIDAS requirements; and ensure trust representation for mutual recognition.

| Country | Highlights |
|---------|-----------|
| AM | *Technical Maturity Rating: **3.05** \| Legal Maturity Rating: **2.47** \| Overall Maturity Rating: **2.76 (Managed)***<br>There is only one certification authority (CA) and one registration authority (RA) in one entity. Armenia should focus to cover gaps in the areas of trust services environmental controls, data privacy and protection, trust services key lifecycle management and trust services certificate lifecycle management. |
| AZ | *Technical Maturity Rating: **3.72** \| Legal Maturity Rating: **1.99** \| Overall Maturity Rating: **2.85 (Managed)***<br>There is a need for secondary and tertiary legislation to enforce best practices and to ensure an adequate level of confidence in the operation of trust services at the trust service providers level. Azerbaijan should focus to cover gaps in the areas of trust services environmental controls, data privacy and protection, trust services practice management, trust services key lifecycle management and trust services certificate lifecycle management. |
| BY | *Technical Maturity Rating: **3.69** \| Legal Maturity Rating: **3.70** \| Overall Maturity Rating: **3.69 (Defined)***<br>There is only one CA with several RAs. The national regulations are being rigorously implemented and followed by all registration authorities in BY. There is an adequate offering of trust services with eight public entities and three private entities. However, the encryption schemes and cryptographic algorithms used by BY currently are not compatible with the requirements of the European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI) and Webtrust standards. Belarus should focus to cover gaps in the areas of trust services environmental controls and data privacy and protection. |
| GE | *Technical Maturity Rating: **2.02** \| Legal Maturity Rating: **2.40** \| Overall Maturity Rating: **2.21 (Managed)*** |

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[3] European Commission, 'Mutual recognition agreement Cookbook' (January 2021), https://esignature.ec.europa.eu/intl-comp/dss-demo/downloads/MRAinfo_Cookbook_v1.0.pdf.

| Country | Highlights |
|---------|-----------|
| | There is only one major TSP which acts as a CA and RA in one organisation. Georgia should focus to cover gaps in the areas of trust services environmental controls, trust services key lifecycle management, trust services certificate lifecycle management, and data privacy and protection. |
| MD | *Technical Maturity Rating: **3.01** \| Legal Maturity Rating: **2.97** \| Overall Maturity Rating: **2.99 (Managed)*** <br><br> To ensure better compatibility with eIDAS Regulation on certificate lifecycle management processes and enforcement of technical controls, Trust services best practices should be addressed at the primary or secondary regulations. Moldova should focus to cover gaps in the areas of trust services environmental controls, trust services key lifecycle management, trust services subscriber key lifecycle management, and trust services certificate lifecycle management. <br><br> As a result of the eSignature pilot performed between Ukraine and Moldova, Moldova has the solution to create digital signatures in testing environment and after the pilot could move it into production. |
| UA | *Technical Maturity Rating:**4.49** \| Legal Maturity Rating: **4.69** \| Overall Maturity Rating: **4.59** (**Defined and Measured***) <br><br> The laws and regulations on trust services are generally mature and compatible with the EU eIDAS Regulation. Ukraine has a very strong offering related to trust services, with 14 public entities and 7 private entities which offer various trust services. Ukraine should focus to cover gaps in the areas of trust services environmental controls, trust services subscriber key lifecycle management, trust services key lifecycle management, and trust services certificate lifecycle management. <br><br> The eSignature pilot was performed between Ukraine and Estonia, and Ukraine and Moldova. As a result of eSignature pilot activities, Ukraine has an eIDAS-compatible solution to create digital signatures. |

**Cross-border eServices**

The aim of this activity is to develop guidelines to enable cross-border eServices, including specific recommendations for the Eastern partner countries for removing organisational and technical barriers. The EU4Digital Facility has finalised the cross-border eServices assessment framework, which will be used to identify gaps in cross-border eServices interoperability enablement. The assessment framework is comprised of the following criteria: European interoperability framework (EIF) principles and interoperability layers, detailed criteria on legislation and policies for implementing cross-border eServices, digital service infrastructure (DSI) criteria, digital enablers used for public eServices, maturity of eService offering, and accessibility for foreigners.

The EU4Digital Facility has initiated the gap analysis with key stakeholders in the Eastern partner countries. Based on inputs collected from the key local stakeholders, the EU4Digital Facility will develop guidelines for enabling cross-border eService interoperability and develop a final regional framework for the enablement of cross-border eServices.

**Key outputs:**

- Finalised cross-border eServices environment assessment criteria.
- Initiated the gap analysis in the Eastern partner countries, including assessment of eServices offered on a national level and across borders, as well as digital enablers used for public eServices.

**eGovernance**

EU4Digital has developed a framework for eGovernance development in the Eastern Partnership region to support universally recognised developments of public administration. The framework highlights the importance of eGovernance when implementing public administration reforms. While eServices play an important role to citizens and businesses, there are basic areas – underlying conditions – that enable eServices and eGovernance overall and that compose the framework: internet access for citizens and officials, presence of digitised data, interoperability of the data, digital identification, governance and policy, as well as legal basis.

Further, EU4Digital will assess the state of play in the partner countries and develop country-specific recommendations. In the future, it is planned that eGovernance framework and recommendations will provide a practical guide to support necessary developments in the EaP.

**Key outputs:**

- Defined eGovernance development analysis approach / dimensions and EU baseline.
- Introductory seminar to present the purpose of the study and eGovernance concept.

**Planning for the upcoming six months**

**eID**

- Roadmaps and action plans for cross-border mutual recognition of trust services and eIDs for the Eastern partner countries.

**Cross-border eServices:**

- Perform country assessment and develop guidelines for enabling cross-border eService interoperability.
- Develop final regional framework for the enablement of cross-border eServices.

**eGovernance – key objectives:**

- Perform country assessment and develop benchmarking report (incl. ongoing programmes in support of eGovernance).
- Develop policy recommendations for the six Eastern partner countries.
- Organise country and regional consultations.

## 3.3 eTrade

### State of play

**Pilot cross-border eTrade solutions**

> **About.** The cross-border eTrade pilot tested the ground for paperless information exchange in selected Eastern partner countries using established EU-wide solution and standards. Specifically, cross-border trade partners (companies) have been exchanging standardised invoice data.
>
> **Pilot countries.** eDelivery pilot was performed between Armenia and Ukraine (inter - EaP), and between Ukraine and Poland (EaP - EU).
>
> **Scope.** EU4Digital tested the cross-border interoperability between Eastern partner countries and EU by exchanging the standardised invoice data using a secure, reliable and trusted channel eDelivery - CEF Building Block. Piloting parties established certified Peppol Access Points and joined Peppol eDelivery network, which enables them to exchange data with the EU and beyond (30 countries in Europe plus Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Singapore, South Africa and USA).
>
> After the concept of cross-border interoperability to exchange eInvoice data was proven on a regional level, EU4Digital prepared a set of recommendations on the required legal, organisational and technical adjustments to facilitate further eDelivery enablement in all Eastern partner countries on the bilateral level.

EU4Digital **successfully concluded a cross-border eTrade interoperability test** by piloting the eDelivery solution between the Eastern partner countries (Armenia and Ukraine) and with the EU (Poland and Ukraine). The **key milestone** achieved is the pilot country connection to the global Peppol eDelivery network, which links more than 30 member countries worldwide, enabling the secure and interoperable exchange of procurement data.

Following the pilot, EU4Digital developed a **set of recommendations** on proposed legal, organisational as well as technical changes to fully enable the use of eDelivery for procurement data exchange. EU4Digital organised a regional workshop to introduce the recommendations to the representatives of the ministries, agencies and other organisations from all six Eastern partner countries. As a result, most of Eastern partner countries already shared their interest in enabling the cross-border interoperability of eInvoice (and other documents) exchange through eDelivery.

It is important to highlight that the result of the pilot activity provides the **ready-to-use technological solution for public procurement purposes** and the possible basis to deliver one of the obligations set under the Association Agreement between the EU and its Member States and associated countries (Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia).

The activity was completed with the **handover** of the solution to the pilot Eastern partner countries. The transfer package included the installation software as well as user guidelines and technical documentation.

**Key outputs:**

- Piloted standardised eInvoice exchange via eDelivery between Armenia and Ukraine.
- Set of recommendations on the required legal, organisational and technical adjustments to be made for eDelivery enablement in the Eastern partner countries and beyond.

- Handed over the package of the tested solution for further development, customisation and adaptation according to the needs of pilot countries.

**Country perspective**

The table below presents the status in the Eastern partner countries on exchange of electronic invoice data.

| Country | Highlights |
|---|---|
| AM | **eInvoicing** is already being used inside the country.<br>**Peppol BIS 3.0** is being tested and one **eDelivery access point** is available in production (realised in the scope of EU4Digital eDelivery pilot). |
| AZ | **eInvoicing** is already being used on a national level.<br>**Peppol BIS 3.0** is not adopted and there are no eDelivery access points established. |
| BY | **eInvoicing** is already being used on a national level.<br>**Peppol BIS 3.0** is not adopted and there are no eDelivery access points established. |
| GE | **eInvoicing** is not being used.<br>**Peppol BIS 3.0** is not adopted and there are no eDelivery access points established. |
| MD | **eInvoicing** is not being used but is considered.<br>**Peppol BIS 3.0** is not adopted and there are no eDelivery access points established. |
| UA | **eInvoicing** is already being used inside the country.<br>**Peppol BIS 3.0** is being tested and one **eDelivery access point** is available in production (realised in the scope of EU4Digital eDelivery pilot). |

**Stakeholder networking**

As part of its networking activities, in May, EU4Digital organised an eCommerce awareness event, which connected more than 70 participants from the Eastern partner countries, including ministries, customs authorities, postal operators, marketplaces, business associations, as well as the EU Delegations and the EU4Digital working group members. The goal of the event was to raise awareness on the changes and new rules for distance sales that are taking effect, starting 1 July 2021, as part of the European Commission's 2021 VAT e-commerce package[4].

Following the successful conclusion of the eCommerce pilot, at the beginning of June, a showcase was organised to visualise step by step how the automated and electronic exchange of eCommerce data takes place between retailers, marketplaces, delivery operators and customs, via the piloted solution – the virtual warehouse.

Further, it is foreseen that final networking activities will be organised to conclude eTrade activities and agree on the way forward. The summary of the overall networking events under the eTrade activity is presented in the table below:

| # | Networking related to piloted solutions | Networking related to sharing information on existing solutions | Networking during events and conferences |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | eDelivery showcase<br>*(Online, December 2020)* | SEED site visit for eCustoms<br>*(Montenegro & Belarus, July – August 2019)* | Digital Transport Days 2019<br>*(Helsinki, October 2019)* |
| 2. | eCommerce showcase<br>*(Online, June 2021)* | eDelivery study visit<br>*(Online, October 2020)* | Digital Transport Days 2020<br>*(Online, October 2020)* |
| 3. | eCustoms pilot site visit | eCommerce awareness event | |

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[4] The EU 2021 eCommerce package/changes: introduction of mandatory electronic advance data in customs declarations, item-level tracking for parcels, changes in taxes payment in cross-border operations.

| # | Networking related to piloted solutions | Networking related to sharing information on existing solutions | Networking during events and conferences |
|---|---|---|---|
| | *(TBC)* | *(Online, May 2021)* | |
| 4. | | eLogistics / eCommerce study visit *(TBC)* | |

Support and facilitation of eTrade network workshops:

1. 6th eTrade network event (Minsk, June 2019)
2. 7th eTrade network event (Helsinki, October 2019)
3. 8th eTrade network event (Virtual, June 2020)
4. 9th eTrade network event (Virtual, December 2020)
5. 10th eTrade network event (Virtual, June 2021)
6. 11th eTrade network event (TBC)

**Key outputs:**

- eCommerce awareness event.
- eCommerce pilot showcase.

**Pilot mechanisms of customs information exchange**

**About**. The customs information exchange pilot facilitates customs-to-customs data exchange and demonstrates the improvement in release time of goods, as well as introducing more advanced customs risk management processes.

**Pilot countries.** Customs information exchange piloting was performed between Belarus and Lithuania (EaP-EU), and is to be performed between two Eastern partner countries (inter-EaP). Currently the negotiations are ongoing between Georgia and the Republic of Moldova.

**Scope.** EU4Digital tested customs information exchange by using the SEED (Systematic Electronic Exchange of Data) solution, implemented in the Western Balkan counties (financed and developed with EU support).

During the EU-EaP pilot, three data exchange related scenarios were tested:

1. Empty Trucks;
2. Exchange of exit data from export declarations (limited data set);
3. Full declaration data set from the export declarations with volunteer companies.

The eCustoms pilot proved the concept of cross-border interoperability to exchange data between customs of EU and non-EU countries (in systematic and advanced manner). In order to enable the use of the SEED solution across the region, EU4Digital prepared the set of recommendations on the required legal, organisational and technical adjustments (for bilateral implementation).

EU4Digital reached an important milestone in the eCustoms pilot – selected scenarios between Customs Administrations of Belarus and Lithuania **were successfully tested and the EU-EaP pilot was concluded**. During the pilot, the process of testing was closely observed by various external parties, i.e. the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA), DG TAXUD and non-pilot Eastern partner countries. These stakeholders are looking forward to learn about the key outcomes and lessons of the pilot activity, which they consider as an important input to the policy or technical decisions.

Following the pilot, EU4Digital developed a set of recommendations on legal, organisational and technical changes required to enable systematic and advanced customs data exchange as well as other state-of-the-art functions (data matching, alerts, etc.) via the SEED solution.

As a final step, EU4Digital will **hand over the tested software** together with technical documentation to the pilot countries.

**Key outputs:**

- Piloted two remaining eCustoms pilot scenarios between Belarus and Lithuania.
- Set of recommendations on the required legal, organisational and technical adjustments to be made for full scale solution (SEED) implementation.
- Prepared handover package of the tested solution for further development, customisation and adaptation according to the needs of pilot countries (for EU-EaP scenario).

**Country perspective**

The table below presents the status in the Eastern partner countries regarding customs information exchange.

| Country | Highlights |
|---------|-----------|
| AM | **Partnership agreement** with EU as well as **bilateral protocols** with Iran and Georgia are in place. |
| AZ | **Bilateral protocols** with Georgia, Ukraine, Turkey, Iran, Russia, Belarus and Uzbekistan are in place to ensure the facilitation of exchanges of electronic customs data. In the future, the **bilateral agreement** with Kazakhstan is planned to be signed. From September 2020, the Twinning Project on 'Support to the State Customs Committee of Azerbaijan in the accession to the Convention on a Common Transit Procedure, Convention on Simplification of Formalities in Trade in Goods and implementation of the **New Computerised Transit System** (NCTS)' was initiated together with Italian partners (Italian Customs and Monopolies Agency). |
| BY | **Bilateral protocol** with Ukraine and **bilateral cooperation** with Lithuania are in place which facilitates the exchange of electronic data exchange between the countries. |
| GE | **Association Agreement** with the EU is signed; in accordance with the requirements of Annex XIII, Georgia introduced a Customs Code. Georgia has completed a Twinning project to facilitate the introduction of the New Computerised Transit System (NCTS) in Georgia. **Agreements** are in place with regards to information exchange with Turkey, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Kazakhstan. Also, with Turkey, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Kazakhstan on partial data set exchange (advanced information on customs declaration, transport document), and Ukraine and soon Turkey on electronic exchange of the full data set. Electronic exchange of Rules of Origin related data is in place with the People's Republic of China and a pilot implementation of the project on verification of origin document by using of blockchain technology is currently underway with Azerbaijan within the scope of the GUAM. Georgia is involved in the Pan-Euro-Mediterranean (PEM) Convention initiative aimed at the development of an electronic facility for origin related data exchange and will be implementing the solution with free trade partners applying the Convention for origin purposes. |
| MD | **Association Agreement** with the EU is signed and requires approximation of customs legislation. Moreover, **agreement** with Ukraine on mutual assistance and cooperation as well as **CEFTA agreement** are in place. **Customs code** was updated in 2020 to specify provisions around simplified customs declaration. |
| UA | **Association Agreement** with the EU is signed and requires approximation of customs legislation. Also, **agreements** with Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Azerbaijan are in place. |

**eCommerce**

**About.** The eCommerce pilot uses digital tools to eliminate barriers and boost eCommerce volumes between the EU and the EaP countries as well as inside the region, especially for SMEs. During the pilot, EU4Digital established a national virtual warehouse to support selected SMEs, marketplaces, postal operators and customs to place products for sale abroad and facilitate cross-border delivery.

**Pilot countries.** eCommerce pilot was performed between the three Eastern partner countries in the South Caucasus – Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia – and Germany (EaP-EU) as well as between Azerbaijan and Georgia (inter-EaP).

**Scope.** EU4Digital established and tested a virtual warehouse to place goods for sale abroad in the EU and the EaP markets. The solution provides a single place for sellers to enter and automatically exchange data needed by customs and delivery businesses for cross-border eCommerce. The national virtual warehouse was established in each pilot country.

In the long term, the virtual warehouse may facilitate eCommerce among the Eastern partner countries, with

> the EU member states and with up to 192 countries within the Universal Postal Union. To facilitate enablement of the solution in the region and beyond, EU4Digital prepared a set of recommendations for the full-scale solution implementation on a national level by the pilot and non-pilot Eastern partner countries.

EU4Digital successfully launched the eCommerce virtual warehouse among the Eastern partner countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia) and the EU (Germany), as well as between the Eastern partner countries (Azerbaijan and Georgia):

- In Armenia, a seller of socks (**Zeal Socks**) sold a product to Germany through the virtual warehouse. The product was delivered to the buyer in 9 working days.

- In Azerbaijan, a seller of handcrafted wooden accessories (**ISAR Group**) sold a product to Germany through the virtual warehouse. The seller was supported by the national eCommerce platform Azexport. The product was delivered to the buyer in 5 working days.

- In Georgia, two Georgian sellers – both women-led businesses, one producing children's clothing (**RKO**) and the other eco-friendly housewarming gifts (**Funduki**) – sold a product to Germany through the virtual warehouse. Both items were delivered to the buyer in 7 working days.

- During the inter-EaP pilot, two sellers from Georgia placed and sold products on the national platform Azexport. The products sold were delivered to the buyer within 4 working days.

During the pilot, EU4Digital was closely cooperating with the German association, which is a member of Ecommerce Europe and is supported by more than 30,000 German SMEs. The German partners were continuously involved in the pilot, **promoting** it and showing strong interest for a future scale-up of the solution.

Following the pilot, EU4Digital developed a set of recommendations regarding the required legal, organisational and technical changes in order to adopt the piloted solution and scale it up in all Eastern partner countries. It is important to note that the after-pilot set of recommendations complement the comprehensive package of recommendations for eCommerce harmonisation between the Eastern partner countries and the EU, developed by EU4Digital at the beginning of 2021.

As a final step, EU4Digital will hand over the tested solution (the installation software as well as user guidelines and technical documentation) to the pilot countries.

Testing of the solution supported the Eastern partner countries in the following ways:

- Provided trainings and solutions to address the existing challenges for cross-border eCommerce by creating digital listing, placing goods for sales abroad, using harmonised data models so that cross-border actors can read the data, facilitating electronic data exchange.

- Strengthened eCommerce ecosystem by connecting international eCommerce actors.

- Increased the awareness of and supported preparation for the 2021 eCommerce VAT package introduced in the EU.

**Key outputs:**

- Developed and piloted eCommerce solution (virtual warehouse) between Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Germany, as well as between Azerbaijan and Georgia.

- Set of recommendations on the required legal, organisational and technical adjustments to be made for full scale solution implementation in the Eastern partner countries.

- Prepared the handover package of the tested solution for further development, customisation and adaptation according to the needs of pilot countries.

**Country perspective**

The table below presents the overview of eCommerce legal framework and standards in the Eastern partner countries.

| Country | Highlights |
|---------|-----------|
| AM | **Legal framework**: Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) is signed with the EU and supports harmonisation of legal framework, including consumer protection, customs area, security of trade, competition, electronic communications and electronic data exchange. Specific eCommerce legislation and eCommerce strategy are not developed. eCommerce law is in progress of update by 2023. |

| Country | Highlights |
|---|---|
| | **Standards**: international (ISO, UPU) and national standards in the field of eCommerce are implemented by The National Institute of Standards. |
| AZ | **Legal framework**: Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the EU is signed but doesn't particularly require harmonisation with the EU legislation or standards, having the focus on international legislation and standards (including the EU). eCommerce law exists from 2006. eCommerce strategy is not developed. eCommerce legislation framework is in progress of update.<br><br>**Standards**: international (UPU) standards are used and standardisation programme is launched by the Azerbaijan Standardisation Institute to develop national standards in the field of eCommerce. |
| BY | **Legal framework**: there is no agreement signed with the EU to influence harmonisation of eCommerce legislation and standards with the EU. Specific eCommerce legislation is not implemented. There is no dedicated eCommerce strategy, but the National Strategy of Informatisation Development includes certain areas of eCommerce.<br><br>**Standards**: international (UPU) standards are used and national standards are developing with the priority to harmonise with international and regional standards. The State Committee for Standardisation of the Republic of Belarus is focused to develop technical regulation system in the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and cooperates with the leading international and European organisations (ISO, IEC, OIML, UNECE, CEN, CENELEC, ILAC, EA, GS1). |
| GE | **Legal framework**: Association Agreement with the EU is signed and requires harmonisation of eCommerce framework with the EU. eCommerce law drafted in 2018 in line with the EU acquis and is planned be to adopted in 2020. There is no dedicated eCommerce strategy, but the Digital Economy and Information Society strategy includes certain areas of eCommerce.<br><br>**Standards**: international UPU standards are registered and implemented. |
| MD | **Legal framework**: Association Agreement with the EU is signed and requires harmonisation with the EU legislation and standards. As a part of this agreement, eCommerce law has been aligned with the EU in 2018. eCommerce strategy is not developed, however there is a "Roadmap for boosting the process of digitisation of the national economy and development of e-commerce", which is being currently updated to include selected actions based on the recommendations provided by the EU4Digital Facility.<br><br>**Standards:** international (UPU) standards are used and national standards are developed by adopting the EU standards – the Institute of Standardisation of Moldova is working on the adoption of the EU standards relevant to eCommerce. |
| UA | **Legal framework**: Association Agreement with the EU is signed and requires harmonisation with the EU legislation and standards. As a part of this agreement, eCommerce law has been developed in line with the EU in 2014. It is planned to be updated by 2023. There is no dedicated eCommerce strategy, but the Digital Agenda includes certain areas of eCommerce.<br><br>**Standards:** eCommerce-related standards are being implemented by the Ministry of Infrastructure of Ukraine, and the postal standards in particular are ensured by the National commission for the state regulation of communications and informatisation. International (UPU) and national standards are being implemented. Ukraine is a partner of the European Committee for Standardisation. |

**Digital transport corridor (DTC)**

The activity was finished in June 2020. Currently, the modalities of the implementation of the digital transport corridor between the Baltic and Black Seas, as well as in other directions, is being considered by the Commission and the EU Delegations.

**Planning for the upcoming six months**

**Networking – key objectives:**

- Organise eCustoms pilot showcase.
- Organise eLogistics / eCommerce study visit.

**Pilot mechanisms of exchange of information– key objectives:**

- (*Subject to approval of considered pilot countries*) Implement inter-EaP eCustoms pilot.
- Prepare recommendations on the required legal, organisational and technical adjustments to be made for full scale solution (SEED) implementation (for inter-EaP scenario).

- Hand over the tested solution for further development, customisation and adaptation according to the needs of pilot countries (for inter-EaP scenario).

## 3.4  ICT innovation

**State of play**

**EdTech Hub programme**

EU4Digital developed the concept for the EdTech Hub programme to upskill employees and increase the competitiveness of SMEs in the Eastern partner countries by providing learning and development opportunities on digital topics such as data and cloud, web and mobile software development, business and innovation management, marketing via digital technologies and others.

The goal of the programme is in accordance with one of the EU policy objectives beyond 2020 to improve the digital skills base of the EaP with the target to digitally empower 1 million EaP citizens.

The concept of the regional EdTech Hub programme includes definition of the key components of the programme: learning content, credentialing and recognition, local partners' involvement, governance and operating model, as well as course catalogue management. The programme is proposed to be implemented in a phased approach starting from the 'Digital Badge Launch' phase with a focus on SMEs and a limited set of badges. In the future stages, the scale-up to other target audiences, badges,  and learning content providers should be considered.

An invitation to express willingness to become the local partner in further implementation actions of the EdTech Hub Programme in the Eastern partner countries was shared with organisations from the region.

The EdTech Hub programme concept received positive feedback from potential international learning content providers and international donors.

**Key output:**

- Concept of EdTech Hub educational programme implementation in the Eastern partner countries.
- Identified potential local partner organisations in each of the Eastern partner countries who will be willing and ready to promote and coordinate EdTech Hub activities on country level.
- Identified online learning platforms as potential providers of the learning content.

**Networking of innovation payers**

During this reporting period, EU4Digital organised the remaining three virtual networking events on policy areas selected by the Eastern partner countries - Intellectual property rights management for digital innovation, Digitising industry (digital transformation of SMEs in traditional sectors), and ICT Innovation ecosystems for start-ups and scale-ups.

The events attracted the following key European organisations: European IP Office, European IP Helpdesk, Digital Innovation Hubs Network, FundingBox, EU Initiative ICT Innovation for Manufacturing SMEs (I4MS), Startup Europe Regions Network and European DIGITAL SME Alliance. Together, the events gathered around 230 participants from about 140 different ministries, agencies, associations, private organisations in the IT, ICT Innovation and related sectors. In total, the EU4Digital ICT Innovation team organised six events that were attended by 390 participants from about 260 organisations in a period of one year.

The networking events raised significant interest from organisations in the Eastern partner countries for future collaboration for experience sharing or joint initiatives at the regional and the EU level (e.g. the APPAU Association in Ukraine developing the Industry4Ukraine platform has connected with a representative of DIH in Hungary am-LAB and continued consultations on digital innovation hub development and related questions after the event), as well as accelerated existing collaboration initiatives (e.g. the event on IP management helped the Armenian IP Agency to facilitate the connection with the European IP Office that resulted in a signed Memorandum of Understanding).

| # | Networking events on selected policy areas |
|---|---|
| 1. | Event on intellectual property management<br>*(Online, March 2021)* |

| # | Networking events on selected policy areas |
|---|---|
| 2. | Event on developing Digital Innovation Hubs <br> (*Online, April 2021*) |
| 2. | Event on ICT innovation ecosystems development <br> *(Online, May 2021)* |

| # | Other events for good practices sharing and policy development |
|---|---|
| 1. | Study visit on start-up ecosystem building in the Eastern partner countries *(TBD)* |
| 2. | EaP Start-up Governance and Policy Coordination Forum *(TBD)* |

**Key outputs:**
- Networking event on intellectual property rights management for digital innovation; topic 'Strengthening the capacity of national patent offices, IPR consultants and other innovation ecosystem actors to provide IPR-related services for start-ups and SMEs in EaP region'.
- Networking event on digitising industry (digital transformation of SMEs in traditional sectors); topic 'Networking with EU Digital Innovation Hubs to enable the development of competence centres, platforms, tools and services supporting digital transformation of SMEs in the EaP region'.
- Networking event on ICT Innovation ecosystems for start-ups and scale-ups event; topic 'Facilitate the development of expert communities and increase their involvement into policy design and implementation'.

**Extension of EU networks and platforms**

As a continuation of the successful networking events, EU4Digital finalised the concept on how to further connect Eastern partner organisations to selected EU networks and platforms.

At the core of this concept is to establish a platform for mapping start-ups and other ecosystem players in the Eastern partner countries, similar to what is done in the EU wide initiative for the EU ecosystem - European Startups. EU4Digital plans to develop and launch the EaP Startups platform by the end of 2021.

**DISC activities**

EU4Digital finalised the **guide for the development of the ICT entrepreneurial ecosystems** in the Eastern partner countries that is dedicated for capacity builders i.e. local policymakers, international organisations, aid agencies and international financial institutions (IFI). The guide provides the ecosystem maturity assessment of each country in the areas of access to knowledge, capital, markets and resources (facilities), as well as country-level recommendations for further development.

EU4Digital conducted consultations with the relevant stakeholders in the Eastern partner countries aimed to initiate and support the implementation of the developed recommendations. The consulted stakeholders were EU Delegations, government level representatives such as ministries, innovation agencies and other related ecosystem players. The consultations are planned to be continued during July-October 2021 with the goal to identify the owner for the implementation of recommendations in each of the six countries.

Currently, there are no clear responsibilities for ecosystem development identified in partner counties as well as lack of understanding of what the owner should do to boost the ecosystem's growth. In order to support the selected ecosystem builders, EU4Digital is to design the ICT entrepreneurial ecosystem builder framework based on the best EU examples, which will include owner's responsibilities and role in the ecosystem, as well as suggested corporate structure. The framework design will be finalised and introduced to the selected owners by the end of 2021.

In parallel, EU4Digital finalised design of a venture fund (named **EaP DISC Capital**) and associated programmes for smart investing in the Eastern partner countries. It is planned that the fund will support more than 1,500 ICT start-ups from idea to early growth stages and generate more than 250 scale-ups in the region.

The fund will be invested by the selected fund owner (international investor and accelerator), international finance institutions and other local/international co-investors.

Considering the biggest gaps being in seed (going into sales) and early (going into international markets) stages of start-ups development, it is envisioned that the fund will provide funding in the form of subsidised debts and equity. Also, it will empower start-ups through the associated programmes, i.e. incubation, acceleration and internationalisation.

The fund is foreseen to be launched by the end of 2022.

**Key outputs:**

- Guide for building the ICT entrepreneurial ecosystems in the Eastern partner countries: maturity analysis and recommendations.
- EaP DISC Capital Programme design and action plan.
- Assistance to the European Commission in negotiations with the international finance institutions on the EaP DISC Capital fund implementation and in the awareness raising presentations with potential fund owners.

**Women in Tech**

The activity was finished in December 2020, when EU4Digital developed the guide and action plan for setting-up women in tech mentorship programmes for the six Eastern partner countries. During this reporting period, EU4Digital took additional steps to raise the awareness and encourage the implementation of the mentorship programmes on the country level by organising presentations of the developed guide to the six local EU Delegations.

**Planning for the upcoming six months**

**Networking of innovation players - key objectives:**

- Organise a study visit on start-up ecosystem building in the Eastern partner countries.
- Prepare a report summarising the lessons learned and key discussion points from the networking events and study visit.
- Organise the 'Governance and policy coordination forum' for the Eastern partner countries.

**Extension of EU networks and platforms - key objectives:**

- Develop a platform for mapping start-ups and other ecosystem players in the Eastern partner countries, similar to European Startups.
- Facilitate the registration of interested ICT innovation and start-up ecosystem stakeholders from the Eastern partner countries in the selected EU networks and platforms.

**DISC activities - key objectives:**

- Continue consultations with the stakeholders of the partner countries to identify the owners for the ICT ecosystem recommendations implementation in each country.
- Design ICT entrepreneurial ecosystem builder framework.
- Continue the assistance to the European Commission in the negotiations with the international finance institutions on the EaP DISC Capital fund implementation and in the awareness raising presentations with potential fund owners.

## 3.5 eHealth

### State of play

**Harmonisation, interoperability guidelines and standards**

The activity was finished in January 2021. EU4Digital has developed, finalised and handed over the common harmonisation and interoperability guidelines and standards to the Eastern partner countries for implementation. Such regional work is deemed as an important input in accelerating eHealth developments on a national level and orienting countries to the aligned direction. As part of eHealth collaboration platform activities, in the next reporting period, EU4Digital will hold an event with key eHealth stakeholders from Eastern partner countries to review the progress of eHealth implementation in the region.

**Country perspective**

The table below provides the key individual recommendations for eHealth harmonisation and interoperability in the Eastern partner countries.

| Country | Highlights |
|---------|-----------|
| AM | • Mature the data exchange infrastructure on the national level, i.e. National Interoperability platform.<br>• Integrate the common eHealth Digital Service Infrastructure (eHDSI) with Public Health Domain Systems to exchange the data about communicable diseases.<br>• Implement or further mature key health care sector systems such as the Specialist Registry, Health insurance information system and Pharmacy information systems.<br>• Define legal conditions under which personal data may be shared cross-border.<br>• Establish data accessibility for Health Care Providers (HCPs) and pharmacists through unified portal. |
| AZ | • Further implement and mature National Interoperability Platform.<br>• Define legal conditions under which personal data may be shared cross-border.<br>• Define processes with clearly assigned roles and responsibilities to provide the clinical information to eHealth platform.<br>• Develop the eHealth digital infrastructure including the eHealth interoperability platform and priority services such as ePrescription and Patient Summary.<br>• Define the governance model of eHealth on a national level.<br>• Establish usage of internationally accepted clinical information standards. |
| BY | • Apply the whole-of-government approach to interoperability (reusability of infrastructure and services, National interoperability platform development)<br>• Establish access to eHealth portal / eHealth services via the common eGovernment services gateway catalogue.<br>• Implement or further mature key health care registers such as the Specialist Registry, Health insurance IS and Pharmacy IS.<br>• Select and implement internationally accepted clinical information standards.<br>• Implement the regulation of patient consent for collection and processing of patient data for medical services, treatment, diagnosis and similar purposes. |
| GE | • Develop eHealth National Contact Point for cross-border interoperability enablement.<br>• Implement the digital health strategy.<br>• Integrate the common eHealth platform with Public Health Domain Systems to exchange data about communicable diseases.<br>• Implement / further mature key health care sector systems such as the Specialist Registry, Health insurance information system and Pharmacy information systems.<br>• Harmonise mandatory ePrescription service implementation with open EU ePrescription specification. |
| MD | • Develop the eHealth interoperability infrastructure adopting the principles from the EU interoperability framework.<br>• Develop Digital Health strategy.<br>• Further develop the Public Health Information Systems.<br>• Implement eHealth data access services.<br>• Harmonise ePrescription service implementation with open EU ePrescription specifications.<br>• Implement Patient Summary service. |
| UA | • Implement legal certainty for foreigner's identification (eID and eSignature regulation) as well as harmonisation of personal ID codes throughout public sectors services and systems.<br>• Develop eHealth strategy.<br>• Implement public health information systems.<br>• Establish Social/ Health insurance information system. |

| Country | Highlights |
|---|---|
| | • Harmonise ePrescription service implementation with open EU ePrescription specifications.<br>• Implement Patient Summary service. |

**eHealth collaboration platform**

In 2020, EU4Digital launched a dedicated eHealth platform, **consisting of a communication portal** as a complimentary part of the EU4Digital website and a separate **eHealth collaboration platform** exclusively for key eHealth representatives from the partner countries. During this reporting period, the eHealth collaboration platform was used to share relevant content such as toolsets and frameworks related to eHealth interoperability and national eHealth strategy development, as well as examples of eHealth strategies in leading EU countries.

For 2021, EU4Digital organised a series of collaboration events bringing together eHealth representatives from the partner countries to share EU practices and provide networking opportunities. The aim of these events is to further support cross-border collaboration and enactment of common harmonisation and interoperability guidelines. The first three events covered topics such as:

- The use of advanced analytics in medical images.
- Best practices of COVID-19 management using eHealth solutions.
- Recent eHealth interoperability developments across the Eastern Partnership.

During these events, Eastern partner countries were given an opportunity to present eHealth wins in their countries, as well as hear from the European Commission (DG SANTE and DG CNECT) about recent developments in supporting COVID-19 management, and the EaP Connect representative sharing their vision of connectivity and collaboration for healthcare professionals through National Research and Education Networks (NRENs).

**Key outputs:**

- Virtual event on advanced analytics usage in medical images.
- Virtual event on eHealth and crisis management practices during COVID-19 pandemic.
- Virtual event on interoperability developments in eHealth across the Eastern Partnership.
- Maintenance and periodical update of eHealth collaboration platform.

**Planning for the upcoming six months**

**eHealth collaboration platform – key objectives:**

- Periodically update eHealth collaboration platform and ensure its smooth operation.
- Maintain cross-border collaboration via organisation of networking events to further support Eastern partner countries in eHealth harmonisation and interoperability activities.

## 3.6   Digital skills

**State of play**

**Digital skills measurement**

The activity was finished in June 2020. EU4Digital developed and presented an information note to DG NEAR on the way forward regarding DESI implementation in the EaP, which will be further analysed and discussed in the coming period.

**National Coalitions**

EU4Digital supported establishing and running National Coalitions (NC) in the countries by providing tailored support: sharing EU best practices and examples, providing ad hoc consultations on policy paper development and inviting NC stakeholders to participate in relevant EU events (such as the IT Professionalism conference 2021 on 20-22 April, and the Launch of the Digital Skills and Jobs Platform on 20 May 2021) on topics important for their situation. NC establishment is still behind schedule in several countries due to COVID-19 related restrictions and political situation. During this period, EU4Digital mostly supported Azerbaijan and Moldova with establishing their National Coalitions by participating in coalition related events as EU4Digital representatives and providing methodological support.

**Key outputs:**
- Mobilised main National Coalition stakeholders in Azerbaijan and Moldova and involved them in EU national coalition events.

**Country perspective**

The table below demonstrates the current status in establishing NCs in the Eastern partner countries.

| Country | Highlights |
|---------|-----------|
| AM | NC was established in 2017 but is currently inactive. During the upcoming period EU4Digital will support Armenia with restarting efforts of the NC. |
| AZ | Azerbaijan established Digital Skills Partnership platform on 15 December 2020, involving key digital skills stakeholders: Ministry of Transport, Communications and High Technologies, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population, and private partners Microsoft Azerbaijan and Azercell. A memorandum has not yet been signed due to COVID-19 related restrictions, however, the cooperation platform is already actively pursuing its goals and participating in events as a NC. |
| BY | With Belarus suspending its participation in the EaP initiative, the possibility of establishing an NC remains unclear as it requires participation and support from government institutions. |
| GE | Draft memorandum and stakeholder list have been developed. During the upcoming period, EU4Digital support will focus on streamlining the signing of the NC memorandum. |
| MD | Moldova is well on its way to establish a NC during 2021 and has already organised a stakeholder mobilisation event on 1 April 2021. During the upcoming period, EU4Digital will provide necessary consultations and other support to establish the NC in Moldova. |
| UA | The National Coalition has been established in 2019. EU4Digital is providing continued support in the form of consultations, e.g. on best international practices for developing the concept paper on Digital Skills, and trainings on competence frameworks and digital skills measurement that are aligned with the Coalition's goals. |

**Conferences, training and study visits and promotion campaign – key objectives:**

The EU4Digital Digital skills stream, in close cooperation with the Communication stream, focused on launching a promotion campaign in all of the Eastern partner countries that included identifying beneficiaries of the Digital skills activities and preparing related campaign materials.

**Key outputs:**
- Launched promotion campaign in all six Eastern partner countries.

### Planning for the upcoming six months

**National coalitions – key objectives:**
- Signed National Coalition memorandums in Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova.

**Conferences, training and study visits and promotion campaign – key objectives:**
- Organise national training on the establishment and management of NCs in Georgia.
- Organise regional training on digital skills measurement, EU practices and methodology.
- Organise regional trainings on the European competence frameworks, Competence Framework use cases and Job Role Profile application, as well as best EU practices for upskilling and reskilling workforce.
- Organise virtual study visit to Ireland (September) and another study visit to Spain or Brussels, depending on Eastern Partner country representatives' preferences.
- Organise conference on digital skills for Industry 4.0.

## 3.7 Communication

Communication plays a major role in making the work of the EU4Digital Facility teams more visible and recognisable for the stakeholders and citizens in the EaP region. As a result of the comprehensive and inclusive communication approach, since 2019 the achievements of EU4Digital have been seen by hundreds of thousands of EaP citizens on the EU4Digital website, in social media and local media outlets. Inspired by these achievements, the EU4Digital Facility communication team continues working to spread clear and relatable messages which help reinforce the EU4Digital brand and highlight the EU's commitment to support the digital transformation of the Eastern partner countries.

**Website for EU4Digital**

The EU4Digital website – **eufordigital.eu** – remains a **key hub for all digital communication and content** on the EU4Digital initiative and related bilateral digital projects. Since its launch, it has seen more than 122,000 visitors, with almost 160,000 sessions, and 500,000 page views. The website is updated daily and maintained in eight different languages (six local languages, English and Russian).

In the reporting period, **120 content pieces** were drafted, edited and uploaded in English, with a total of **610 content entries in all eight languages**:

| Type | English | Armenian | Azerbaijani | Belarusian | Georgian | Romanian | Russian | Ukrainian | Total |
|------|---------|----------|-------------|------------|----------|----------|---------|-----------|-------|
| News | 53 | 31 | 29 | 29 | 30 | 30 | 32 | 41 | **275** |
| Events | 21 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 19 | 18 | 18 | 18 | **145** |
| Feature stories | 19 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 6 | 3 | 11 | 8 | **61** |
| Library | 27 | 14 | 14 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 17 | 15 | **129** |
| **Total** | 120 | 68 | 65 | 62 | 69 | 66 | 78 | 82 | **610** |

To track the efficiency of the website performance, **two 3-month website analytics reports** (covering January-March and April-June) were prepared. The key highlights in the period January-June:

- **49,292 total website visitors** with 48,661 being new visitors, compared to 45,631 website visitors in the period of July-December 2020;
- **197,669 total website page views**, compared with the 181,295 page views in July-December 2020.

To keep the information on the EU4Digital website factual and relevant on both regional and country levels, the static content is undergoing regular revision and is updated accordingly.

The process of the **EaPeReg's website development** was launched in the reporting period. The content structure and the overall wireframe were set, which created the basis for the further steps of the network's webpage creation.

Finally, as part of this activity, key project outputs were shared via the capacity4dev web platform (with a total of **27 updates**). The number of views and downloads show that there is a clear interest in EU4Digital materials on this knowledge sharing platform (e.g. the most popular EU4Digital publication had 389 downloads).

**Key outputs:**

- 120 content items in English and 490 in national languages on the website.
- Two quarterly website analytics reports.
- Key project outputs on capacity4dev web platform.

**EU4Digital social media presence**

With the support of social media, the communication team aims to engage with the target audiences and raise their awareness about EU4Digital through interactive and entertaining formats. The targeted and engaging social media campaigns have already reached more than 9 million people to explain the EU's support behind the EU4Digital, build trust with the EaP citizens and inspire support and advocacy among audience and relevant stakeholders.

In the reporting period, the communication team worked on three campaigns – a thematic **eHealth campaign** was launched on 18 December and was run together with five EU Delegations (all except BY), EU Neighbours East and DG NEAR until 5 January. It **reached a total of over 2.61 million people** on social media. The posts resulted in a total of **42,774** unique link clicks – more than 10 times the previous campaign results. There were

a total of **1 million post engagements,** such as reacting to, commenting on or sharing, viewing a photo or video, clicking on the post or a link. Timing for this campaign was optimal with COVID-19 and eHealth related matters being at the centre of attention of the target audiences. Considering the relevance of the topic to the broad public, an interactive quiz was used to engage with the audience. The choice of this and other campaign's tools proved to work well looking at final campaign results.

The second thematic campaign in the reporting period, focusing on Telecom Rules and more specifically the benefits of the Regional Roaming Agreement for citizens of Eastern partner countries, run between 20 April and 25 May 2021 on the channels of the EU Neighbours, six EU delegations and DG NEAR. The campaign promotion continued longer on EU Delegations' channels to align with their social media calendars and allow for most of the Telecom campaign's content to be released. The campaign reached **2.85 million** people through organic campaign posts and ads. The posts resulted in a total of **40,904** unique link clicks, only slightly below the eHealth campaign. Total post engagements amounted to **835,885.** This campaign set reach as the main KPI, thus additional effort was invested into the media outreach and media coverage from the stories we developed for this campaign exceeded all expectations: we collected 48 clippings (the number of times the stories appeared in different media) in four countries, with a combined potential reach of over 41 million people. Finally, to broaden the campaign's reach, cooperation was established with six influencers in the five countries, with an additional audience of 294,000 people.

In the reporting period, the team also developed the communication materials for the **Digital skills campaign,** which was launched on 29 June and ran till 6 July. This campaign has been smaller in scope, if compared to eHealth or Telecom, which will be reflected in the final KPIs, to be collected and reported in the upcoming period.

Finally, the preparations for the next and final EU4Digital campaign started in June. In consultation with DG NEAR it was decided to merge eTrade and Trust & Security individual campaigns into an integrated campaign around the tangible benefits for the citizens and businesses that EU4Digital solutions bring to life. This campaign has been preliminarily planned for the first half of November.

**Key outputs:**

- eHealth campaign successfully implemented.
- Telecom campaign successfully implemented.
- Digital skills campaign launched.

**Communication activities and visibility of EU4Digital**

**Three feature stories** around the RRA were prepared and published in the framework of the Telecom campaign in cooperation with the local media partners in Georgia, Ukraine and Azerbaijan. These stories triggered additional media coverage, including a TV reportage on AZTV. In addition, **three more stories** on the regulator's independence were prepared. The feature story on the regulator's independence in Azerbaijan triggered additional coverage in 18 more media portals in the country, including most influential media - all with a positive tone of voice. The feature story on the regulator's independence in Ukraine was published and further adapted for Armenia where it was promoted on the website and social media channels of the media partner. Final element in relation to the Telecom campaign included the preparation and publication of a story on 5G by the Ukrainian media partner. With these stories, all activities of the EaPeReg's working groups have received sufficient exposure and coverage.

**Five** feature stories were developed and published in each of the five countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine), participating in the Digital skills campaign.

**Three newsletter editions** were prepared and distributed: the February edition was delivered to 1,743 subscribers, the April edition to 1,958 subscribers and the June edition was sent to 2,167 subscribers.

From its launch, the newsletter subscription database has **grown by 307%,** from 532 recipients in July 2019 to 2,167 recipients in June 2021. The subscribers list is growing organically and sees major spikes during the social media campaign periods.

New **partnerships** with media outlets in Azerbaijan (Oxu.az), Moldova (NewsMaker) and Armenia (Mediamax) have been established to further improve the quality of produced media materials and increase the national reach.

Finally, the **EU4Digital Glossary** was translated into national languages for the future use for translators and interested partners. The English version of the Glossary was published on the website.

**Key outputs:**

- 12 feature stories created and published by the national media outlets.
- Three newsletters prepared and disseminated.
- Three new media partners engaged.

- EU4Digital Glossary translated and published.

**Impact and result monitoring**

Continuous monitoring and provision of answers for ad-hoc requests was ensured during this six-month period. Progress was tracked and reported with the bi-annual report.

**Key outputs:**

- Continuous performance monitoring.
- Reporting on results.

**Ensuring coherence and coordination of activities**

In the reporting period, the EU4Digital communication team kept supporting established collaborations and building synergies with the new partners. In this period, the **cooperation was launched** with:

- New EU Neighbours East team (which replaced the previous team in January 2021) to agree upon the new strategy, content promotion approach and social media campaigning schedule and collaboration format;
- DG NEAR TAIEX Unit to coordinate the cross-promotion of their workshops.

EU4Digital also kept **contributing with content** to the partner communication products, such as EU-Moldova Cooperation e-Newsletter (sixth and seventh editions), Azerbaijan business climate report, as well as EU4Business annual report 2020 (with a section on eCommerce readiness).

Finally, the EU4Digital communication team held a discussion with DG NEAR about the **new Communications and Visibility guidelines[5]** (in force since January 2021) and the way it should be reflected in EU4Digital communication products.

**Key outputs:**

- New collaborations established.
- Contributions to partner communication products.

**Planning for the upcoming six months**

**Website for EU4Digital – key objectives:**

- Perform regular content and technical maintenance of the EU4Digital website.
- Gather and process quarterly website analytics and monitor the website's performance.
- Share key project outputs via capacity4dev web platform.

**EU4Digital social media presence – key objectives:**

- Finalise the promotion and analyse the performance of Digital skills campaign.
- Run the final (eTrade and Trust & Security combined) social media campaign and gather analytics.

**Communication activities and visibility of EU4Digital – key objectives:**

- Plan, initiate and conduct thematic communication campaigns.
- Develop and promote campaign package materials.
- Develop and distribute September and November editions of the EU4Digital newsletter.
- Communication support around the Steering Committee meeting, and other EU4Digital events.

**Impact and result monitoring – key objectives:**

- Continuous monitoring support, answering ad-hoc requests.
- Reporting on results with progress reports, including preparation of political summaries.

**Ensuring coherence and coordination of activities – key objectives:**

- Maintain synergies between EU4Digital and other relevant EU initiatives.
- Maintain and support internal communication processes.

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[5] The use of the EU emblem in the context of EU programmes 2021-2027. Operational guidelines for recipients of EU funding.

# 4 Key events

## Summary of past events

The following section presents multiple digital-related events that took place in the Eastern partner countries during the past six-month period (January 2021 – June 2021) in the six thematic areas. While face-to-face events and meetings could not take place due to COVID-19, online work continued, including meetings and workshops.

| Past events |
|---|
| **General** |
| <ul><li>8th ECO-NET meeting (January). Organised by DG NEAR.</li><li>Digital Transport and Logistics Forum (DTLF). 5th Plenary Meeting (February). Organised by DG MOVE.</li><li>Shaping EU industry future - The regional Innovation landscape of Industry 4.0 (March). Organised by APPAU (Association of Industrial Automation of Ukraine).</li><li>Multi stakeholder dialogue on the Ukrainian way into The EU Digital Single Market (April). Organised by NGO 'European Media Platform'.</li><li>International Girls in ICT Day (April). Organised by CSR Ukraine (Centre for CSR Development).</li><li>EU4Moldova: Startup City Cahul - Innovation, EU digital and IT initiatives in Moldova (May). Organised by EU4Business.</li><li>XIth International Seminar on Trade and Transport Facilitation - Digital transformation of multimodal transport using the UN/CEFACT reference data model (May) Organised by UNECE.</li><li>Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum Working Group 2 event, policy session on digital transformation (June). Organised by Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum.</li><li>Bilateral continuation of EU4Digital in Moldova (June).</li><li>Bilateral continuation of EU4Digital in Armenia (June).</li><li>Bilateral continuation of EU4Digital in Ukraine (June).</li><li>Bilateral continuation of EU4Digital in Azerbaijan (June).</li><li>Bilateral continuation of EU4Digital in Georgia (June).</li></ul> |
| **Telecom rules** |
| <ul><li>Harmonised approach establishment across the EaP for connectivity KPIs monitoring discussed during regional workshop with key stakeholders on regulatory independence and broadband (April) *(Read more).*</li></ul> |
| **Trust and security** |
| <ul><li>Trust and Security in focus at EU4Digital network event (April) *(Read more).*</li></ul> |
| **eTrade** |
| <ul><li>Successful conclusion of eDelivery pilot in Eastern partner countries: reflections and next steps (February) *(Read more).*</li><li>Virtual eCommerce showcase to demonstrate how a virtual warehouse supports cross-border product listing and logistics in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and the EU member state (June) *(Read more).*</li><li>What will electronic commerce look like in 2021 and beyond? EU4Digital eCommerce awareness event highlights upcoming changes (May) *(Read more).*</li><li>EU4Digital: 10th eTrade Network Workshop highlights latest developments and way forward (June) *(Read more).*</li></ul> |
| **ICT innovation** |
| <ul><li>ICT Innovation networking event highlights intellectual property management and opportunities to strengthen capacity of ecosystem actors (March) (*Read more*).</li></ul> |

| Past events |
|---|
| • Developing Digital Innovation Hubs in the Eastern partner countries: specialisation as a component of success in developing and pursuing international collaboration (April) (*Read more*). <br> • Networking on ICT innovation ecosystems development: empowering start-ups and SMEs through associations and formal communities (May) (*Read more*). |
| **eHealth** |
| • Virtual event on advanced analytics usage in medical images (March) *(Read more).* <br> • Virtual event on COVID-19 experience in eHealth and crisis management practice (May) *(Read more).* <br> • Virtual event on interoperability developments in eHealth across the Eastern Partnership (June) *(Read more).* |

## Events planned for the upcoming six months

The following section presents events planned in the upcoming reporting period (July 2021 - December 2021) in the six thematic areas. The calendar is indicative (both dates and countries); a confirmed plan of events will be provided every month together with monthly progress reports.

| Upcoming events |
|---|
| **Telecom rules** |
| • EaPeReg Plenary for high level country representatives (22 July). <br> • Stakeholder Forum to present the final text of both RRA and RRA as well as further steps on its signing (September) <br> • Meeting of the EaPeReg Roaming Expert Working Group (REWG). Date to be decided. <br> • Meeting of the EaPeReg Independent Regulators and Broadband Expert Working Group (IRB EWG). Date to be decided. <br> • Meeting of the EaPeReg Spectrum Expert Working Group (SEWG). Date to be decided. <br> • Official signing ceremony of the RRA and RSA (December). |
| **Trust and security** |
| • Trust and Security Network event. Date to be decided. <br> • Consultations with stakeholders of the six Eastern partner countries on recommendations based on cross-border eServices interoperability assessment. Date to be decided. <br> • Introductory seminar(s) to present the purpose of the eGovernance study and concept / framework. Date to be decided. <br> • Country and regional consultations with stakeholders of the six Eastern partner countries on recommendations based on eGovernance assessment. Date to be decided. |
| **eTrade** |
| • eCustoms pilot showcase. Date to be decided. <br> • eLogistics / eCommerce study visit. Date to be decided. <br> • 11th eTrade network event. Date to be decided. |
| **ICT innovation** |
| • Study visit on start-up ecosystem building in the Eastern partner countries. Date to be decided. <br> • EaP Start-up Governance and Policy Coordination Forum. Date and topics to be decided. |
| **eHealth** |
| • Virtual event on EIP on AHA progress update (August). |

| Upcoming events |
|---|
| • Virtual event on the introduction to eHealth strategic development approach (October). <br> • Virtual event on common eHealth harmonisation and interoperability guidelines implementation progress tracking (December). |
| **Digital skills** |
| • Regional training on digital skills measurement: EU practices and methodology. Date to be decided. <br> • Regional training on a general overview and benefits of European competence frameworks. Date to be decided. <br> • Regional training on the Competence Framework. Date to be decided. <br> • Virtual study visit for best practice sharing on NC and digital skills measurement to Ireland or Spain. Date to be decided. <br> • Conference on digital skills for Industry 4.0. Date to be decided. |