

Statement for the WTDC High Level Segment

Chair, Madame Secretary General, Distinguished Colleagues,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the following countries; Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and my own country, Poland, which are all members of the European Union. We congratulate Azerbaijan, a key partner and fellow CEPT member, for hosting this conference and we thank ITU and in particular its Development sector and the Office for Europe for their support.

We are committed to **bridging the digital divides, deploying secure and trusted digital infrastructure and developing capacities** across all regions.

Digital development is at the core of the International Digital Strategy of the European Union and is a key pillar of the Global Gateway, which is Europe's offer for connecting the world with public and private investments and partnerships by 2027 and has so far mobilized over €306 billion for sustainable and high-quality projects, building smart and secure connections globally. Whether it's laying subsea fibre-optic cables between Europe and the rest of the world, bringing high speed satellite broadband across villages, deploying secure and trusted mobile networks, promoting Early Warning Mechanisms for all, supporting e-governance solutions, or fostering cyber resilience. Global Gateway shows our commitment to digital transformation.

Mr. Chair,

We see WTDC as an important opportunity to strengthen ITU work on the **2030 Agenda and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement**. Digital transformation can and should help tackle **climate change** and achieve sustainable development, while paying attention to the need to mitigate potential adverse effects of digital technologies on the environment.

Furthermore, a human-centric and human rights-based approach is key to progressing towards a safe, resilient, trustworthy and ethical digital future. We trust these principles will be reflected in the **Baku Declaration, in the new ITU-D Action Plan and in the relevant resolutions** that will be discussed in the next two weeks. We are committed to inclusion, equality and equity: the principles of non-discrimination, gender equality, protection and empowerment of individuals and marginalized communities in vulnerable situations and universal access must be reinforced and mainstreamed in ITU's work in the Development sector as a corner stone of meaningful connectivity.

To this end, we support the European Common Proposals as presented by **CEPT**.

We believe fair and equitable access to fiber-optic cables as well as space resources is key to concretely achieving universal and meaningful connectivity. In today's space economy, satellite systems are pivotal to connect the remaining 2.6 billion people still offline and their relevance should be considered in the **new ITU-D Action Plan**. In this context the ITU also has an important role in ensuring effective management of spectrum and satellite orbit resources.

We thank ITU for its support to **Ukraine** in rebuilding its telecommunications infrastructure, whereas a lot more needs to be done due to Russia's ongoing war against Ukraine. EU support goes to the rebuilding of telecommunications infrastructure in **all countries affected by crises and war**.

The work of ITU's regional offices is key and we are grateful for the cooperation on the review of ITU's regional presence. We encourage ITU to strengthen synergies with other UN agencies to avoid duplications and ensure effective support.

We recall that the ITU Radio Regulations Board urged the administration of the Russian Federation to investigate and cease harmful satellite and RNSS interferences affecting neighbouring countries, including several EU Member States. The Board confirmed that independent measurement data had geolocated the source of these interferences within the territory of the Russian Federation, as well as the occupied territory of the Crimean Peninsula.

These repeated disruptions—endangering civilian lives at times—constitute a serious violation of the ITU's legal framework, including the principles and norms enshrined in the ITU Constitution and Radio Regulations. These interferences are unacceptable and must stop.

I would like to conclude by restating our willingness to work with all regions to bridge the digital divides and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. We wish all good luck for a successful WTDC.

I thank you.