DIGITAL DATA:
A MATTER OF EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

The digital revolution has opened up huge pathways and opportunities in terms of our everyday and domestic lives and in a variety of fields too (health, prevention, intelligent management of public spaces, facilitating daily life, democratic practice, etc.).

In order to make them available to as great a proportion of the population as possible, the significant digital resources accessible on the Internet require a variety of different services to be put in place, from search engines and social networks to geolocation services, among other things. As the visible face of Big Data technologies, a limited number of players have now become valuable and indeed essential gateways for a significant number of online activities. With this in mind, such platforms have considerable influence over citizens and even States, whilst their economic weight gives them a certain power over many sectors of activity.

Citizens, businesses, States and their respective administrations alike participate fully in this digital world without even truly appreciating the opportunities or indeed the risks that it represents. This lack of awareness reinforces the imbalance of information between major Internet operators and citizen users. The PRISM affair, together with the revelations by Edward Snowden, have helped raise awareness among global public opinion of the risks of facilitated hyper-surveillance, notably through the digital traces left behind on a daily basis, the amalgamation of which, whether by public or private players, can prove detrimental to fundamental freedoms.

The domination of American economic players and the resulting harnessing of the value produced in France (owing to a lack of appropriate economic and fiscal responses) raise the issue of economic and political independence. Unless we put in a bid of our own, both entire sections of our industries will suffer and a data management approach that contradicts our ethical requirements will be implemented as a result, bringing with them risks pertaining notably to infringements of people's private lives, of which we are currently seeing only the tip of the iceberg.

In such a context, managing digital data has become a crucial matter for the coming century. Whilst the majority of the data circulating on the Internet is now created by human beings, connected devices, sensors and other robots will be generating the majority of network-based traffic in the near future. The ability of citizens to manage these new data flows could become one of the most significant features of the information architecture of our societies.

This has led the ESEC to advocate the construction of a collective legal and ethical framework for this digital ecosystem that will be able to guarantee the same rights for all players and the effective defence of their freedoms. There are various responses to such a situation, and these must be technical, political, legal and ethical in nature and be able to support the transformations that are currently under way both by adapting our behaviours appropriately and encouraging innovation and a sense of daring. Underestimating the issues associated with the digital sphere means taking the risk of not offering any protection for basic rights and developing in a dehumanising technicist manner.

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PROMOTING DIGITAL EDUCATION

The better informed and trained people are in the issues associated with the digital sphere and personal data protection and the greater the awareness they have, the more demanding they will become where their political representatives are concerned. In order to achieve this, the ESEC would suggest the following:

⤵ **Assisting and supporting the educational role of the family in the digital transition**
  - Promoting public campaigns designed to raise awareness of personal data protection and making digital education the major national cause for 2016.
  - Increasing online protection for minors by means of a European strategy for protecting minors on mobile devices.

⤵ **Supporting the development of digital education from nursery school through to higher education:**
  - Improving digital education in school curricula and ensuring that it is dealt with from a cross-sectional perspective in order to incorporate it in all disciplines.
  - Introducing pupils to the basic principles of computer science and code-learning.
  - Increasing certification by means of the Internet and computer user's certificate (Brevet informatique et internet), which should be continuously adapted to incorporate aspects relating to data protection in particular.
  - Placing greater importance on the issues associated with the digital sphere within teacher training programmes.

⤵ **Fighting new digital divides**
  - Making the notions of digital inclusion and social inclusion inseparable by means of ongoing and comprehensive public action throughout the country as a whole and in rural and peri-urban areas in particular in order to provide lifelong digital education for all.
  - Revitalising Digital Public Spaces (DPSs), which are currently suffering from the lack of any real public policy that ensures consistency between the various initiatives they implement, to enable them to become valuable platforms for raising awareness of the handling and production of data.
  - Promoting 'third places' such as the FabLabs and supporting the non-profit players that span the country and implement valuable citizen emancipation projects.

BUSINESSES AND ADMINISTRATIONS: WORKING TOWARDS AN ETHICAL DIGITAL POLICY

The need for citizens to feel a sense of trust, security and protection creates a new requirement for companies and administrations with regards to using data. With this in mind, the ESEC would suggest the following:

⤵ **Promoting a data security and protection policy within businesses and administrations**
  - Making personal data protection a new source of competitive advantage for a business.
  - Developing the concept of 'privacy by design', that is data protection incorporated in a tool from the very design stage.
  - Introducing a right to the 'silence of the chips' and making the choice to opt-in, based on free and informed consent, more widespread.

⤵ **Creating a public digital policy and devising an industrial strategy**
  - Developing a public digital policy linked to an industrial policy by directing public sector contracts towards the design of high-added-value services in the digital field and towards SMEs and start-ups in particular.
  - Encouraging the creation of a general State administrator of technologies position reporting to the Prime Minister.

CREATING A REALISTIC AND DEMANDING DATA PROTECTION FRAMEWORK FOR THE DIGITAL AGE

The ESEC would recommend that the French public authorities play a more clearly defined and daring role in reforming European and even global texts. It recommends the following for the purposes of ensuring true diplomacy in the digital sphere:

⤵ **Creating an international data protection framework**
  - Encouraging a European digital culture that serves to guarantee the architecture of the Internet.
  - Supporting the European data protection regulation project.

⤵ **Strengthening regulatory powers**
  - Increasing the CNIL's means of recommendation, monitoring and sanction.
  - Guaranteeing the anonymisation of Open Data personal data.

⤵ **Seeking ways and means of enabling individuals to manage their own personal data.**
  - Making control panels that enable Internet-users to access, manage and transport their personal data more widespread.