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VICE PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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To Members of the Global Tech Panel

Dear Members,

Like many Europeans in my generation, I grew up with the dream of a more cooperative global order after the Cold War era. Today, in my daily work, I witness first-hand the current state of global confusion, and I see a resurgence of zero-sum thinking. Too many players seek confrontation to achieve their short-term goals, instead of building sustainable solutions through cooperation. Too often unilateral instincts prevail over the search for common ground.

Yet it should be clear that our world is too complex for unilateralism. Power is more diffuse and fragmented than ever. Not only do we live in a multipolar world, where several nations have risen to the status of global or regional powers. Most of the issues of our times cannot be solved by national governments alone. If we want our action to be effective, we must build new coalitions. Foreign policy today is no longer a matter for diplomats and policy-makers alone.

As humans, we have navigated previous periods of tumultuous change. We can take advantage of the huge opportunities offered by technology, and at the same time counter the emerging challenges posed by technology. I hope that the Global Tech Panel can be part of that effort.

I propose that we focus on three specific areas of work to start.

First, how do we deal with the new security threats arising from digital technologies? The nature of conflict has changed throughout history. Today, cyberspace has emerged as the latest front, as the newest advances in digital technology not only bring enormous benefits for humankind, but can also be weaponized. Tech leaders – including some of you on this Panel – have identified real potential challenges with autonomous lethal weapons systems and applied artificial intelligence. We must take these challenges into consideration, while we also explore the potential benefits of new applications of artificial intelligence.

The European Union is already contributing to developing the capacity of our international partners to address cyber threats, fight cybercrime and promote the rule of law in cyberspace. We engage in cyber diplomacy and we actively seek international agreements on responsible behaviour in cyberspace. But for all of this, we need a partnership with those in the tech world who shape the global cyber-landscape and artificial intelligence in particular. [REDACTED]

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Second, I am convinced that the opportunities of global connectivity outnumber its risks, by far. Think of a continent of immense untapped potential such as Africa. Over the last years we in the European Union have worked to bring private investment to the most fragile parts of the continent. Young African talents should not be forced to leave their home countries to find the opportunities they deserve. They need access to technology and quality education, they need the chance to develop their ideas and get support for their start-ups. Much of this you know – and do – much better than any government agency could dream of doing. What the European Union can bring to the table are strong relations with political leaders at the highest level, which can be leveraged to improve governance and create a more conducive ecosystem for start-ups and human development. Together with my European Commission colleagues, we speak to the heads of state and government of African countries all the time. I hope this Panel can find innovative ways to give value to talent in these fragile places, so that no one is left behind. This may sound like a long shot – but it is always worth aiming high.

These two areas – new threats and technology for development – will take time to deliver a decisive impact. This is why I would like to see this Panel work on a third priority: addressing practical challenges and get results within a year.

Could we do something for Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon, or in Turkey where Turkish language skills are the gateway to a better life? You will each know of projects that fit this mould of quick impact by joining tech and diplomacy. I would like to see the Global Tech Panel as a place where challenges and solutions meet.

In bringing you all together, my aspiration is to have an open conversation and to build a common understanding of what needs to be done. I see this Panel not as a one-off exercise to produce yet another policy paper, but as an incubator for new solutions. We can aim for practical suggestions to share with policy-makers at top level, all around the world. We will certainly need voices from Africa and Asia as we move forward. If we embark upon the challenge of artificial intelligence and security, we will need to bring in other partners as well. I have spoken to my friend Antonio Guterres, the Secretary General of the United Nations, and we could involve him in our discussions. No doubt, you will have thought about people who should be on this Panel too. Let us have that reflection together as well.

I look forward to welcoming you all to the first meeting of our Global Tech Panel (#GlobalTechPanel) on 6 June from 14-17:00 at the Headquarters of the European External Action Service, Rondpoint Schuman 9A in Brussels. Together, I hope we can foster a new type of cooperation between diplomacy and technology to make innovation a true force for good, in all corners of the world.

Yours sincerely,



Federica Mogherini