VERBAND DER INTERNETWIRTSCHAFT E.V.

CORE POINTS

Towards European open digital ecosystems

Berlin, 3 February 2026

With the call for evidence on European Open Digital Ecosystems, the Commission aims to strategically address the Open Source Software sector in Europe, which is regarded as a building block for fostering Europe's digital sovereignty. The consultation's findings are regarded to be put forward to a new strategy thereupon.

eco – Association of the Internet Industry would like to contribute to the questions raised by the Commission as follows:

I. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the EU open-source sector? What are the main barriers that hamper

(i) adoption and maintenance of high-quality and secure open source; and

The adoption of open-source software in the market in great scale is currently largely obstructed through existing structures – mainly in cloud computing – that hamper cloud switching and implementation of the software stack. Vertical integration is currently rare in the open-source software market and is also largely regarded as difficult to sustain and structurally unstable. Past projects have also shown that the implementation of open-source software (OSS) is often hampered by lack of acceptance amongst users and lack of competence and personnel to deploy and run OSS successfully in a business context. What remains to be seen is, whether regulation through the European Data Act will change vendor lock-ins. Finally, the current structure of the open-source software market shows a clear concentration within US American vendors raising question on, whether switching to OSS is actually contributing to digital sovereignty, regarding the origin of the software.

(ii) sustainable contributions to open-source communities?

Open-source communities in Europe are struggling in different ways to develop and maintain OSS. One of the major drawbacks, OSS developers in Europe encounter is the lack of funding for their activities. Different analyses show that European companies are not contributing towards financing Open-Source Foundations and setting them up has proven to be often difficult. General statements on this instance are hard to address. However, in the example of Germany, we can see, that developing OSS even as a non-commercial activity is under scrutiny. Here, a European approach fostering non-commercial OSS development and maintenance as a contribution to the common good would be helpful. Further measures could increase the activity in open source communities, but may lead to market

distortions. It should also be noted, that open-source communities are generally not necessarily aligned to certain geographic boundaries.

II. What is the added value of open source for the public and private sectors? Please provide concrete examples, including the factors (such as cost, risk, lock-in, security, innovation, among others) that are most important to assess the added value.

OSS contributes to existing technologies in many ways. It allows companies to quickly deploy open-source elements into their own software solutions. Another factor to be weighed in is the fact, that public code can be easily accessed and used for other purposes. An example for this is a French video service, whose technology is the foundation for different other videoconferencing applications.

From eco's point of view the three factors are relevant when deploying OSS. First, security is paramount for the deployment of OSS. This may hold true especially for standard software, where larger user-groups and respectively larger interested developers will contribute to the development and the maintenance of the software.

III. What concrete measures and actions may be taken at EU level to support the development and growth of the EU open-source sector and contribute to the EU's technological sovereignty and cybersecurity agenda?

Based on the experiences made, eco recommends a market driven approach to the development of OSS. This means, that no legal obligation to deploy OSS should be forwarded, since this creates new lock-in effects, which – as described above – do not necessarily further the agenda on creating digital sovereignty.

That said, eco would welcome the acknowledgement of OSS development and maintenance may be adding to the common good, given, that no service in whatsoever way is deployed commercially.

IV. What technology areas should be prioritised and why?

The focus for OS technology should initially focus on areas, where software developing communities are the largest in Europe. Apart from that, focus should be given to those areas, which are providing cross section advances in IT like cybersecurity.

V. In what sectors could an increased use of open source lead to increased competitiveness and cyber resilience?

Basically any industry can profit from open source. In general, the IT industry, which employs open source code in different ways profits the most from open source development. Respectively, cyber security oriented developments need to be paid regard without neglecting existing European cyber security solutions.