

Press statement by Hiroshige Seko, Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), Japan, Naoki Ota, Special Advisor to the Minister, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC), Japan, Haruhi Kumazawa, Commissioner of the Personal Information Protection Commission, Japan, Andrus Ansip, Vice President of the European Commission, and Věra Jourová, Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender equality

Hiroshige Seko, Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), Japan, Naoki Ota, Special Advisor to the Minister, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC), Japan, Haruhi Kumazawa, Commissioner of the Personal Information Protection Commission, Japan, Andrus Ansip, Vice President of the European Commission, and Věra Jourová, Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender equality, met in Hannover on 20th March 2017 with a view to advancing cooperation on the data economy.

They recalled the results of the 2016 G7 ICT Ministers' meeting and the G7 Ise-Shima Summit in Japan, where both G7 Leaders and Ministers shared a number of fundamental principles and adopted action plans towards the realisation of a digitally connected world.

In their discussions, they shared the view that digital data is an essential resource for economic growth, competitiveness, innovation, job creation and societal progress in general and called for more close and regular exchanges and mutual learning to foster the development of the data economy, including through the promotion of the free flow of information, taking fully into account the respective legislation and measures related to the protection of personal data.

More specifically, they expressed their readiness to enhance cooperation on the data economy on the following four points:

1. Promoting high standards of data protection and facilitating free flow of data

They reaffirmed the importance of ensuring a high level of privacy and security of personal data as a fundamental right and as a central factor of consumer trust in the data economy.

They acknowledged that recent reforms of their respective privacy legislation offer new opportunities to further facilitate mutual data flows, including through finding an adequate level of protection.

They consider that it is important to intensify discussion on these common objectives.

2. Promoting industrial cooperation involving small and medium-sized enterprises

They stressed the importance of actively involving small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), including start-ups, in industrial cooperation between Japan and the EU to stimulate innovation and promote synergies between corporations and dynamic SMEs.

They underlined the importance of cooperation on the Internet of Things (IoT) between

businesses, and welcomed the signature at CeBIT on 20th March 2017 of a Memorandum of Understanding for IoT cooperation between the Japanese IoT Acceleration Consortium and the European Alliance for Internet of Things Innovation.

3. Strengthening the dialogue on the challenges of the data economy to promote mutual learning, share best practices and promote alignment

They confirmed the importance of data in the modern economy and committed to a continuous exchange of views, using such opportunities as the Japan-EU Business Round Table.

They called for expert meetings focusing on the aspects of the data economy, and running alongside established dialogues such as the Japan-EU ICT Policy Dialogue, the Japan-EU Industrial Policy Dialogue and the Japan-EU Business Round Table.

They confirmed their commitment that representatives of relevant ministries and government organisations of Japan would participate in these expert meetings, together with relevant Directorates-General of the European Commission.

4. Jointly improving tools to measure impacts of the data economy

They shared the view on the importance of promoting analytical and statistical work to better assess the social and economic impacts of digitalising our economies and societies.

To this end, they encouraged experts to exchange views and promote joint work, involving and working with experts from the OECD and other international institutions.

A specific focus should be placed on developing internationally comparable measurement tools, built on initiatives for the global data economy such as the European Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI).

Hannover, 20th March 2017