

Open letter to

Federal Digital Minister Dr Karsten Wildberger
Federal Ministry for Digital and State Modernisation
Englische Str. 30
10587 Berlin

from

Identity Valley Research gGmbH
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and the connected responsible tech ecosystem

Subject: Made in Europe. Built on Principles. For the People.
> Germany's path to responsible digital sovereignty.

Unkel / Berlin, 06 May 2025

Dear Mr Federal Minister,

Digital sovereignty has been a strategic goal for Germany and Europe for years. But in view of current geopolitical developments, disruptive AI innovation and new transatlantic dynamics, it is now more urgent than ever. The coming months will be decisive in determining whether Europe remains capable of acting in the digital age, strengthens its innovative power in industry and science and at the same time safeguards the digital rights of its citizens.

Against this backdrop, we welcome the objectives set out in the coalition agreement for a "digitally sovereign Germany" - in particular the development of interoperable digital infrastructures, the strengthening of trustworthy technologies and value-led regulation. The task now is to resolutely implement this course. Germany can not only provide national impetus, but also set the pace for a European digital culture based on trust, responsibility and participation. We would like to share the following five priorities with you as inspiration and a basis for a joint, personal dialogue - **for a digital agenda that combines economic resilience with democratic substance.**

Five priorities to strengthen a sovereign digital future for Germany:

- 1. Expand leadership role in responsible technologies ("Responsible Tech")**
Building on the coalition goal of a sovereign digital economy, we are proposing the Establishment of a catalogue of criteria that - similar to ESG standards - makes trustworthiness and a focus on the common good in the digital sector visible and is thus more attractive to capital markets and investors. This would create clear incentives for companies to make their digital governance more resilient and trustworthy.
- 2. Credibly strengthening law enforcement and building civil society resilience**
The reform of data protection supervision announced in the coalition agreement, simplification of the GDPR application or specification of the AI Act can provide important impetus for the economy.

However, the motto "move fast and break things" should not be emulated. In order to credibly safeguard basic digital rights, Germany should work towards this, to specifically promote civil society organisations in the digital space, for example through dedicated funding lines and active involvement in digital regulatory and consultation processes - this also corresponds to the aspiration of an effective, democratic digital state.

3. **Digital infrastructures for the common good**

The development of the German stack, the modernisation of the administration and the introduction of a secure eID are central projects in the coalition agreement, which we expressly welcome. It is now important to implement these in a national, preferably European-coordinated infrastructure strategy. Large projects such as *EuroStack* could be supported by IPCEIs, public procurement and national acceleration laws. Here likewise, with the involvement of civil society players who have already been active in the field of digitalisation and society and responsible leadership for many years, particularly in Germany.

4. **Talent strategies and promoting excellence**

The attractiveness offensive for digital specialists, the focus on AI breakthrough innovations and the strengthening of clusters are key steps in setting the course. We advocate an EU-led talent strategy that combines scientific excellence with social impact - also in order to position Germany as a pacesetter in particularly relevant fields such as AI, responsible technology, data sovereignty and digital democracy.

5. **Strengthening democracy through digital rights**

The coalition agreement emphasises the importance of digital participation, the fight against digital discrimination and the online identity protection. To this end, the principles of European Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles, that have been signed by Germany, must be put into concrete practice. We propose encouraging a network of local digital engagement hubs to create locations where citizens can comprehend, co-create, and implement digital rights. A nationwide competition for innovative municipal participation formats and targeted funding via EU funds such as the CERV programme or the Digital Europe Programme could serve as catalysts.

We extend our best wishes for a successful beginning in your role of responsibility and are very happy to discuss all of these perspectives with you. As we are working on many of these topics (also transatlantic), we would be happy to meet with you to discuss the upcoming challenges facing your ministry.

Made in Europe. Built on Principles. For the People.

Yours sincerely

Jutta Juliane Meier & Ferdinand Ferroli, Identity Valley

Olly Salzmann & Clemens Binder, KI Park

About the authors

Identity Valley gGmbH

Identity Valley is a non-profit organisation committed to a digital transformation that puts people at the centre. Building on the Digital Responsibility Goals (DRGs) - a Framework for responsible digital behaviour - Identity Valley is working on the development of trustworthy technologies, digital infrastructures oriented towards the common good and effective regulatory approaches. In close cooperation with stakeholders from politics, science, business and civil society, Identity Valley is committed to a European digital culture that places transparency, participation and responsibility at the centre.



KI Park e.V.

The AI Park is a non-profit organisation and Europe-wide networked innovation ecosystem with over 230 companies, start-ups, research institutions, technology partners and social and political players. Together, we are driving forward the development and application of artificial intelligence - with a focus on key technologies such as generative AI, deep reinforcement learning, 5G & 6G and digital twins. The AI Park creates spaces for exchange, the realisation of projects and overcoming challenges together - in order to shape trustworthy, value-oriented and forward-looking AI in Europe.



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