Beyond 5G
The need for trusted and secure digital infrastructure

Today more than ever, the digital connectivity of our economies and societies, including their healthcare systems, transportation, communications, and industry, depends on the availability and security of the underlying digital infrastructure. It will also define our future when digitalization determines the competitiveness of industries, countries, and the "West" more broadly. 5G has been front and center of global and geopolitical competition.

In the meantime, the inconvenient truth that digital infrastructure based on untrusted technology cannot be trusted is widely accepted. Consequently, the European Commission has recently declared to seek ending the usage of digital services that rely on technologies from untrusted vendors.

De-risking our digital infrastructure is urgently needed in the current geopolitical situation. While the introduction of 5G has sparked the discussion, 5G security risks are just the tip of the iceberg. The digital infrastructure that powers essential public and private sector services, supporting vertical applications in transport, energy and water supply, government services, and even military operations, encompasses fixed connectivity, cloud technologies, optical networks, and IP infrastructure – all of which must be secure and trusted. The good news: it can be done, as several countries in Europe have shown by introducing measures that ensure that dependency on Chinese technology is not growing and is phased out over time.

To foster a collaborative and comprehensive understanding of these challenges, the upcoming event brings together officials and experts from different disciplines and countries. The focus is on moderated, outcome-oriented discussions. There is an ample supply of public opinions and views of commercial stakeholders in this debate, and the arguments defending the commercial interests of industry and telecom operators are well known. For this reason, we will limit participation to officials, experts, and other public stakeholders.

Participants of the event will have the chance to discuss how to approach the "precautionary measures" given that the consequences of sabotage, data manipulation, or privacy breaches by foreign powers could have catastrophic consequences for our digital societies and economies.

The upcoming event "Beyond 5G - The need for trusted and secure digital infrastructure" co-organized by the German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF) and the Digital Society Institute (DSI) at ESMT Berlin, aims to provide a fresh impetus to the discussion in Germany, Europe, and beyond. The event will be held under the Chatham House rule.

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Agenda (October 9, 2023)

14:00-14:10 *Introduction and Welcome Remarks from GMF / DSI, ESMT*
- **Heli Tiirmaa-Klaar** (DSI, ESMT Berlin)
- **Sudha David-Wilp** (GMF Berlin Office)

14:10-14:30 *Keynote:*
Beyond 5G - a NATO perspective
There is no resilience without resilient digital Infrastructure; there is no resilient digital infrastructure based on untrusted technology.
- **Christian-Marc Lifländer** (NATO)

14:30-15:15 *Moderated Discussion:*
Political, economic and security lessons learned from the 5G experience
At the peak of the 5G debates in 2019 and 2020, there was a blizzard of competing claims about cost, rollout times, and threats of retaliation. A couple of years on, we can assess how it worked in practice for various countries that were in the spotlight, including the UK and Sweden, and what policy lessons we should take.
- **Oscar Almén** (FOI)
- **Hosuk Lee-Makiyama** (ECIPE)

Moderation: **Antonia Hmaidi** (MERICS)

15:15-15:30 **Coffee Break**

15:30-16:00 *Facts and Figures*:
Context: The Landscape for Europe's Digital Infrastructure
Overview over Europe's digital infrastructure landscape, highlighting the latest trends and important facts and figures on current development
- **John Strand** (Stand Consult)

Moderation: **Dr. Felice Simonelli** (Cassa Depositi e Prestiti)

16:00-16:15 **Coffee Break**

16:15-17:25 *Panel Discussion:*
Political Imperatives for Trusted Digital Infrastructure
With Germany's 5G decisions still being discussed and a growing list of examples of gaps to close - from Deutsche Bahn digitalization contracts to harbors' and clinics' private networks, cloud servers, and fiber connections. What is the path forward for building trusted digital infrastructure?
- **Thorsten Benner** (GPPi)

- **Dr. Valentin Weber** (DGAP)
- **Dr. Anchalee Rüland** (Norbert Röttgen, MdB (CDU))

Moderation: **Falk Steiner** (Table.Media)

17:25 *Closing Remarks:*
- **Heli Tiirmaa-Klaar** (DSI, ESMT Berlin)

17:30 **Networking Reception**