

## Summary of IN2030 virtual meeting with Damian Collins MP and Christos Dimas MP

### “The power of the digital transformation : perspectives to 2030”

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Key issues arising from the open and friendly discussion are set out below:

#### OPENING COMMENTS

Need to realise the impact of technology on society. Several issues have become apparent where the question of how to regulate arises – electoral interference by the Russians in the US and recent EP elections; right of free speech; degree of self-harm among the young as well as the current wave of misinformation on the Covid pandemic.

Actions being taken in the UK, EU and now the US to preserve democratic structures. The current case of Facebook in Australia is revealing as this is a sign that things are changing.

The recent rapid change in the ability to communicate between individuals over the past 3 decades has been extraordinary. The speed of change has continued to accelerate through the pandemic. Working from home has spread hugely and will remain as part of society when the pandemic has passed. This means of communication has been particularly helpful for a country like Greece which has many islands and mountains.

But questions arise as to the power of companies to decide issues of speech on their own eg the removal of Trump from Twitter. Europe less well endowed with Big Tech than the US or China, but certainly taking the lead with GDPR.

#### SPECIFIC COMMENTS

There was little appeal in nationalising the large Tech companies even were that to be possible. Better to find ways of regulating their activity on an international basis. Companies must comply with rules of countries where they operate. The EU proposals for the DSA and the DMA are current examples of what should be done.

Chinese companies such as Huawei pose a different question as to their acceptability. The access to fast speeds of connection which they provide can be important, but the problem of security cannot be avoided when vigorously raised, not least by the US.

The loss of trust was raised in particular with a young generation which does not seem to be concerned about issues of accountability. Companies such as Facebook and Instagram are used to boost their career opportunities. But the impact of fake news on the young is important.

Important that the EU US and the UK work on a common approach where possible as the issues are global in nature. The upcoming meeting of the G7 could provide an opportunity to coordinate their views. Mobilisation of political actors would be helpful.

#### CONCLUSION

The speed of technological change is relentless as new technologies come onto the market place ( eg AI, 5G and quantum computing ). The fact is that the political world has been slow to regulate to protect its citizens – in particular a young generation eg from fake news. Quicker and more focussed regulatory action is needed to rebuild the trust of voters.