



The Tallinn Consensus on Trusted Connectivity

At the Tallinn Digital Summit on 7 September 2021, high-level representatives from the world's many democracies and international organizations called for a unifying framework—Trusted Connectivity—to improve coordination among democracies so that our digital future is built upon democratic values and that the architecture underpinning our digital future advances human dignity, fundamental freedoms, and reaffirms the international rules-based order. Their collective concern gave rise to the **Tallinn Consensus on Trusted Connectivity**.

Connectivity comprises the full range of digital and physical infrastructure—from telecommunications to roads and railways—that bind the world together. **Trusted Connectivity** provides a framework to optimize cooperation among the world's democracies to deliver on the global demand for physical and digital infrastructure and embodies two fundamental attributes: one of technical assurances, the other of legal and political assurances. The former guarantee that technology adheres to widely-agreed democratic principles and high standards for safety, security, and other social concerns including cybersecurity and data transfers. The latter represent the legal and political systems that inform and govern the tools and technologies that deliver connectivity.

The Tallinn Consensus calls for a coordinated effort on part of democratic countries to:

- 1) **Forge Trusted Connectivity partnerships** among each other and with emerging economies to ensure the widest possible adoption of the Trusted Connectivity framework and to convey shared values and interests regarding investments into connectivity. The EU, following its partnerships with Japan and India, should expedite the EU—US Trusted Connectivity partnership.
- 2) **Improve existing and establish new financing mechanisms** to mobilize private investments in meeting the global demand for digital and physical infrastructure. The G7, the Indo-Pacific Quad, and other like-minded nations should prioritize and facilitate interoperability across respective financial mechanisms to enable complementary and joint financing of those infrastructure projects based on the principles Trusted Connectivity.
- 3) **Better communicate existing public and private Trusted Connectivity investments** by the G7, the Indo-Pacific Quad, and other like-minded nations in global digital and physical infrastructure. A complete picture of public and private investments in global connectivity will render greater balance and confidence in the ability of democracies to deliver on global infrastructure demand.
- 4) **Establish a brand for individual Trusted Connectivity projects**. This brand would be a certification of excellence and a manifestation of Trusted Connectivity at the level of individual projects. For example, the Blue Dot Network which encourages public-private investments in global connectivity by certifying high-quality transparent infrastructure projects.

Trusted Connectivity, as an overarching framework for democracies to collaborate on addressing the global demand for infrastructure, should be adopted and refined as appropriate at the upcoming:

- EU—US Trade and Technology Council meeting on 29—30 September 2021 to utilize Trusted Connectivity as an organizing framework to collaborate across the Build Back Better World initiative and "A Globally Connected Europe," and expedite the EU—US Trusted Connectivity Agreement.
- OECD Ministerial Council meeting and the Blue Dot Network side event on 5—6 October 2021 to commit to further develop and define the principles of Trusted Connectivity.
- European Council meeting on 21—22 October 2021 with a view to implementing Trusted Connectivity as the "unifying narrative" and "brand name" of the European Union's connectivity agenda.
- UN Climate Change Conference on 31 October — 12 November 2021 to adopt Trusted Connectivity to ensure that democracies respond to the global demand for infrastructure in keeping with commitments on global emissions targets.
- Summit for Democracy on 9—10 December 2021 in reaffirming Trusted Connectivity as a democratic framework for a free, open, and connected world, thereby demonstrating the ability of democracies to deliver on global infrastructure demand while advancing free and open societies and markets.

Addendum

The Tallinn Consensus on Trusted Connectivity is based on the following statements by leaders at the Tallinn Digital Summit on 7 September 2021:

President of Estonia, Kersti Kaljulaid:

- “[Estonia’s] proposal is to call it the Tallinn Consensus—that we all make sure that the technologies we use are tried and tested in a way that our people would feel investing into and using. /.../ We need a broad consensus that we want to move forward in this way in our democratic values based world.”

President of the European Council, Charles Michel:

- “We must do more: be more strategic, be more streamlined, and better market and brand our offer—Trusted Connectivity. And most importantly, it should reflect our European vision of what a partnership should be: fair, balanced, and human-centered.”

Prime Minister of Estonia, Kaja Kallas:

- “Our shared democratic values—openness, transparency, and the protection of individual rights—form the ideological basis of Trusted Connectivity. Trusted Connectivity is a framework for democratic countries that governs issues such as data protection and cybersecurity, standards for the free flow of data and for sustainable development.”
- “Trusted Connectivity is rooted in the idea that we need a framework for financing international infrastructure projects based on a common set of values. To achieve this, we must protect data and allow it to move more freely. Effective data and cyber security create trust. And trust is an important part to attracting private sector investments. The role of the public sector in democratic countries is to set the rules of the game: to cultivate trust and to facilitate innovation.”
- “The Tallinn Consensus is about connecting different initiatives. /.../ We have a common set of values, we have many things we agree on—why don’t we just start from the things on which we agree and then move to the more difficult things. /.../ Let us start moving, step-by-step, and get to this union of all these initiatives in order to push forward the democratic principles we all agree on.”
- “The concept of #TrustedConnectivity fits perfectly the EU’s global connectivity & trade agenda. We should make this a part of the EU’s connectivity policy.”

Prime Minister of Poland, Mateusz Morawiecki:

- “Trusted Connectivity is extremely important and we should really invest our time, effort, and money in this initiative.”
- “Trusted Connectivity can be an attractive alternative to those who use technology as a potent tool to stifle democracy and freedom.”

Prime Minister of Australia, Scott Morrison:

- “Your theme of Trusted Connectivity is one of the core foundations that Australia’s Digital Economy Strategy is built upon. Our digital economies and infrastructure must be resilient and secure, governed by principles and standards that protect our citizens’ autonomy, privacy, and data.”

Executive Vice President of the European Commission, Valdis Dombrovskis:

- “I fully agree that as a strategic goal, as a vision, we should work on Trusted Connectivity and on EU–US interoperability.”
- “This issue will be very high on our agenda in the coming months and years. This event helps crystallize the concept and different work directions for Trusted Connectivity. I do look forward to good cooperation within the EU and with like-minded partners internationally to bring this agenda forward.”
- “In the EU, we attach a lot of attention to this concept of Trusted Connectivity and to the concept of a human-centric digital transition. When we talk of the digital transition of the economy, it is important that it respect human rights standards, that it respect data protection standards, privacy, that it is trustful artificial intelligence, that it allows for competition. Those are all approaches which are reflected in different EU initiatives and legislative proposals.”

Secretary of Commerce of the United States, Gina Raimondo:

- “We can ensure data is shared responsibly and securely while respecting national sovereignty and differences between domestic privacy laws. This is what interoperability is all about—and it must be at the center of our efforts for a Trusted Connectivity. /.../ At the center of our cooperation are our shared democratic values, including individual liberty, transparency, a transparent government, and privacy. We should look at interoperability between our systems as an outgrowth of these shared values.”

- “Whether it is the Blue Dot Network, which is an excellent certification system, or Build Back Better World—or the umbrella of Trusted Connectivity—the point is packaging and certifying investments pursuant to a certain set of standards related to our democratic values, human rights, labor standards, and climate. That is what is necessary to unleash the capital—whether that is public-sector, quasi-public like the DFC, or pure private-sector capital.”
- “Building a consensus—having frameworks, having certifications based upon our shared values—will increase the flow of capital into infrastructure, which is necessary, and allow us to together write the rules of the road for emerging technology. Which is vital because if we, the democratic countries will not write the rules of the road, we know that autocratic countries will. That is what I hope we all stay focused on as we develop that consensus.”

Secretary-General of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, Mathias Cormann:

- “As we seek to optimize, to strengthen the quality of the post-COVID recovery, Trusted Connectivity will be increasingly important.”
- “To achieve Trusted Connectivity, we need to ensure it is genuinely human-centric, that it is values-based—democratic values based.”