Joint policy statement
Human-centric approach at the core of the standardisation and connectivity

Delivered by CZ on behalf of the 27 EU Member states and 29 other states

ITU Plenipotentiary Conference, September 2022, Bucharest

Mr. Chair, Mr. Secretary-General,

Distinguished Ministers, Ambassadors, ladies and gentlemen,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 27 EU Member states as well as Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Australia, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Canada, Costa Rica, Ghana, Chile, Iceland, Israel, Japan, Kenya, Montenegro, Mexico, Morocco, North Macedonia, Norway, Principality of Monaco, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Peru, Principality of Liechtenstein, Rwanda, Serbia, Switzerland, Tunisia, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Since we last met at the ITU Plenipotentiary conference four years ago, telecommunications/ICTs have expanded and developed at a tremendous pace, unlocking great opportunities for humanity and the world, but also generating new challenges to governments and societies. We are particularly concerned about the persistent digital divides that further exacerbate social and economic inequalities around the world.

Now more than ever we need a strong, impactful, and efficient Union providing core expertise in the domains of radio communications, telecommunications/ICTs standards, and bridging the digital divide, including with regard to gender, age and persons with specific needs. The Union should contribute to the digital transformation that puts humans at the centre, empowers individuals and provides meaningful connectivity.

To this end, we promote a **human rights-based approach** to the whole life cycle of telecommunication/ICT technologies – including design, development, deployment, use and disposal - as part of a **human-centric vision** of the digital transformation, including in international standard-setting processes.

In this light, we should work together to achieve a digital transformation based on openness, inclusion, equality, sustainability, resilience and security. We encourage the ITU, as a member of the UN family and working with other Standard Development Organisations to develop international telecommunications/ICTs standards that are consistent with existing international frameworks on human rights and fundamental freedoms.

We welcome other UN efforts in this direction, in particular the Human Rights Council Resolution on new and emerging digital technologies and human rights (A/HRC/RES/47/23) that calls for consultations with standard development organizations on human rights and telecommunication/ICT.

It is equally important that the ITU, which builds upon the expertise of various stakeholders, including industry, SMEs, and academia, redoubles its efforts to make its procedures more transparent and accessible, including to organizations active on human rights aspects of telecommunications/ICTs. Forging consensus and making sure that all stakeholders are heard forms a critical part of the ITU´s work.

Thank you for your attention