



# Trade and Technology Council

Working Group: Promoting SME Access to and Use of Digital Technologies



## ISSUE

The rollout of 5G, coupled with fibre and enhanced Wi-Fi capacity, is one of the most critical building blocks of our digital economy and society. Ensuring uninterrupted availability of high-speed, high-quality, reliable and secure digital infrastructure is critical to enabling small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to engage and benefit from the new opportunities available to them in the digital economy. Together with connectivity, SMEs' growth fundamentally depends on the possibility of easily sourcing workforce with digital skills as well as access to open markets.



## PRIORITIES

The areas in which the working group can and should strive to achieve immediate results are:

### Connectivity

The EU and the US should commit to accelerating the digital transformation of SMEs. The EU and the US could pursue common connectivity objectives by:

- enabling network deployment;
- ensuring networks can be used to meet the needs of more heterogeneous use cases; and
- fostering demand, including the acceleration of 5G adoption, emphasising the need for open, interoperable standards and open source architectures (ORAN).

### Digital skills

The EU and the US should define and promote common approaches to education, life-long learning and reskilling, which are all critical to ensuring the workforce is ready for the jobs of tomorrow. The establishment of public-private partnerships (PPPs) could help students build the digital skills they need by promoting non-traditional educational pathways, including apprenticeships, certifications, and other training programmes.

### **Export opportunities for EU and US SMEs**

Both sides should aim to create the best conditions for SMEs to succeed, for instance through facilitation measures that would significantly reduce the costs of doing business across the Atlantic (notably online) and therefore favour SMEs transitioning to e-commerce sales by:

- increasing border facilitation through digitalisation and ensuring a safe and seamless delivery of goods;
- creating a level playing field for all operators involved in the e-commerce ecosystem; and
- developing a digital guide for goods and services exporters/investors providing practical information (ie, licensing and authorisation procedures by sectors, relevant contacts, documents and costs).