

PRESS RELEASE

Organizations in Europe form alliance to promote public dialogue on digital change

Switzerland, Sweden, Serbia, Ukraine, Poland, Liechtenstein and the City of Vienna are providing new impetus for digitalisation. During the fourth Swiss Digital Days, which will take place from 1 to 3 November 2020, 7 organizations committed to digitization will sign a joint declaration of intent. They intend to intensify cooperation in the field of digitization and to promote exchange between the organizations, in order to foster an effective public dialogue. To this end, parallel Digital Days are to be held throughout Europe from 2021 onwards to achieve a broader impact. Further organizations are to be encouraged to join the initiative. digitalswitzerland assumes the role of project management to coordinate the activities.

Zurich, 2. November 2020 – Three years ago, an initiative was launched in Switzerland to promote public dialogue on digitization in the form of a nationwide action day: the Swiss Digital Days. The declared goal is to involve citizens in discussions about digitization, strengthen digital skills, enable sound opinion-forming - and raise awareness of digital change processes among citizens. Digitization is to be made accessible and comprehensible to the general public.

The Swiss Digital Days have already attracted international interest in recent years. Delegations from France, Serbia and China, as well as ambassadors from more than 20 countries, visited the major event on digital change in 2019. Poland, Liechtenstein and Germany have already held their own Digital Days, following the example of Switzerland.

Marc Walder, founder of digitalswitzerland: "I am very pleased that other organizations are adopting the idea of this kind of Digital Day. Such transnational interest groups, which pursue the same goals, make Europe stronger as a digital location. And we have a lot of catching up to do. The cooperative exchange between as many organizations as possible is crucial for this. For autumn 2021, we are planning Europe-wide Digital Days that will take place simultaneously.

Swiss Digital Days goes Europe

The European Initiative for Digitization and Public Dialogue aims to promote exchange and knowledge about digitization and its effects by jointly addressing its opportunities and challenges. The Alliance aims to involve all parts of society in these efforts and ultimately contribute to the development of a European society in which digitization plays an increasingly important role.

Diana Engetschwiler, overall project manager of the Swiss Digital Days: "An alliance of values between the seven organizations is an equally important and welcome first step in order to continue to play a stronger role in digital change and to jointly stand up for basic values, such as responsibility, sustainability and security.

Marcus Wallenberg, Chairman of SEB and co-founder of the Swedish Digital Day initiative Digital@ldag: "As digitalization affects our society broadly, we need to find ways to include all citizens and all parts of society and to maximise the benefits of new technologies. We must also

address the challenges they bring and I believe in doing this by joining forces in Europe to learn from each other and to collaborate”

"Since initiatives with such a broad impact usually come from governments, I am proud that the civil sector is initiating and implementing activities to fully promote the opportunities that digitization has brought us. I believe that this contribution can be essential for Europe's prosperity in the digital age and that's why the Digital Serbia Initiative is working with our counterparts from other countries," says Nebojša Đurđević, CEO Digital Serbia Initiative.

The following representatives have joined the alliance: Marc Walder - Founder of digitalswitzerland, Ivo Furrer - President of digitalswitzerland, Marcus Wallenberg - Chairman of the SEB and co-founder of the Swedish Digital Day Initiative Digital@ldag, Susanne Ackum - President Future Work Forum Sweden, Nebojša Đurđević - CEO Digital Serbia Initiative, Dipl.-Vw. Klemens Himpele - CIO of the City of Vienna; Aleksander Kutela - President of the Board of the Digital Poland Foundation, Constantine Vasuk - Director of the IT Ukraine Association and Patrick Stahl - Co-Managing Director digital-liechtenstein.li.

About the Swiss Digital Days

The Swiss Digital Days 2020 will bring the Swiss population closer to digitalisation. For the fourth year in a row, people can find information, take part in discussions on current topics, and learn tangible digital skills for use in daily life. During the first week of November 2020 more than 400 free events will be on the programme, both online at digitaltag.swiss/en/ and live at the various locations. Over 20 locations are taking part: Aarau, Basel, Bern, Biel, Brig, Geneva, Grenchen, La Chaux-de-Fonds, Lausanne, Lugano, Martigny, Neuchatel, Olten, Sierre, Sion, Solothurn, St. Gallen, St. Moritz, Vaduz, Winterthur, Yverdon, Zermatt and Zurich.

The Swiss Digital Days are supported by around 100 partners from business, science and the public sector. The main partners are APG|SGA, Google, Ringier, SBB, Scholtysik & Partner, SRG SSR and Swisscom.

About digitalswitzerland

digitalswitzerland is a joint initiative from business, science and the public sector with the aim of turning Switzerland into an international leader for digital innovation. To that end, digitalswitzerland is already active in a wide variety of different fields, including collaborations, knowledge transfer, education, start-up ecosystems and policy frameworks. More than 175 of the most well-known companies and organisations as well as innovative locations all across Switzerland are already part of this association. The initiative was set up in 2015.

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