

**DECLARATION OF COOPERATION ON
A EUROPEAN BLOCKCHAIN PARTNERSHIP**

Country A

Country B

Country C

Country D

etc.

In October 2017, the European Council asked the European Commission to present a European approach to blockchain and invited the Commission to put forward initiatives for strengthening the framework conditions that enable the EU to explore new markets and to reaffirm the leading role of its industry.

The European Commission already launched the EU Blockchain Observatory and Forum in February 2018 and will invest some € 300 million in projects supporting the use of blockchain in a number of technical and societal areas through its programme Horizon 2020. Member States have been very active in supporting blockchain ecosystems, beginning experiments and announcing actions at government level. The private sector is also actively pioneering blockchain to improve efficiency, enhance trust and promote growth. Blockchain and distributed ledger technologies are seen as particularly promising in ensuring more security, integrity and transparency when delivering services, enforcing regulations and ensuring efficiency in legal compliance.

In order to harness the many opportunities of blockchain and avoid a fragmented approach, the signatories of this declaration agree to cooperate to establish a European Blockchain Partnership with a view to developing a blockchain infrastructure that can enhance value-based, trusted, user-centric digital services across borders within the Digital Single Market.

I. The signatories of this declaration recognise the potential of blockchain to transform digital services in Europe.

1. Europe is well placed to take a global leadership position in the development and application of blockchain and distributed ledger technologies which can change the way citizens and organisations collaborate, share information, execute transactions, organise and deliver services.
2. Blockchain-based services have the potential to enable more decentralised, trusted, user-centric digital services, and stimulate new business models benefiting our society and the economy. Such services will create opportunities to enhance services in both public and private sectors, notably making better use of public sector information while preserving data integrity, and providing better control of data by citizens and organisations interacting with public administrations, reducing fraud, improving recordkeeping, access, transparency and auditability, within and across borders.

II. The signatories of this declaration will work together towards realising the potential of blockchain based services for the benefit of citizens, society and economy.

3. Close cooperation between Member States towards a European ecosystem for blockchain services and applications can avoid fragmented approaches. It can enable the development of interoperable frameworks for blockchain in Europe based on standardised solutions and governance models. Such cooperation can also strengthen compliance with regulations and regulatory convergence which is essential to support scalability of such solutions across borders.
4. Further research and innovation actions gathering leading European industrial actors and academic institutions through collaborative projects, as already envisaged under Horizon 2020, are desirable to address scientific barriers and future developments of blockchain technologies, including theoretical models, scaling up and monitoring tools, security, architectures, data confidentiality and economic models.
5. A blockchain services infrastructure building on existing initiatives, with governance involving public authorities, should support interoperability and open interfaces, with the highest standards of security, confidentiality and personal data protection compliance whilst offering economies of scale as compared to a plethora of non-interoperable private blockchains. Such a trusted framework may provide a level playing field and foster competition, with SMEs and start-ups being able to access and provide cross border services on an equal footing with larger players. Once established, such services could be used to support trusted digital services on the internet in general.
6. The European Commission has already implemented similar cooperation through the Connecting Europe Facility's Digital Services Infrastructure, where services such as eID, eProcurement, eHealth, Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) or Electronic Exchange of Social Security Information (EESSI), were successfully deployed for the benefit of citizens.

III. The signatories of this declaration will work together to support the following objectives of a European Blockchain Partnership:

7. The signatories will each designate a Representative to work with the European Commission in order to take the partnership forward and to complete the following actions, drawing also on the expertise gathered through the EU Blockchain Observatory and Forum:
 - a. By September, 2018, identifying an initial set of existing cross-border digital public sector services that could benefit from added value supported by a future blockchain services infrastructure, and start exploring other use cases;
 - b. By the end of 2018, assisting the Commission in preparing the technical specifications of this initiative, defining the appropriate governance model and identifying other framework conditions which are essential to its success (including compliance with regulatory requirements). Due consideration should be given to possible cooperation between the public and private sector.
8. The signatories of this declaration will share experiences, best practice and key takeaways related to the implementation of blockchain applications.

The signatories of this declaration invite the European Commission to take the necessary steps, where appropriate in support of the objectives of this Declaration, and in particular by proposing blockchain as a new Digital Service Infrastructure in the work programme under the Connecting Europe Facility and by continuing support to blockchain projects under Horizon 2020. The intention is to launch the first cross-border actions by the end of 2019.

The signatories of this declaration invite all Member States, EFTA and EEA Countries to join this cooperation.