ELEARNINGNEWS ARTICLE

Year 5 - number 183 Wednesday 1 december 2021

EU Commission: Digital Europe, Cybersecurity and DIH Programme

The EU Commission has launched three programmes: the Digital Europe Programme, the Cybersecurity Programme and the DIH Programme. 7.5 billion euros allocated for the diffusion and use of digital technologies.

On November 10, the European Commission adopted the Digital Europe Programme. The program, which allocates a budget of 7.5 billion euros, aims to disseminate and facilitate the use of digital technologies by businesses and citizens with the aim of strengthening Europe and ensuring technological sovereignty. Digital Europe's first calls will be published by the end of November, with more calls due in 2022. Some actions, such as themes under the **Destination Earth** initiative, will be implemented through indirect management, with partner organizations handling the necessary developments.

The European Commission has proceeded to publish the main work program and two other specific programs:

1. The main work program 2021-2022

The **core work program 2021-2022** will focus on investments in the areas of artificial intelligence (AI), cloud and data spaces, quantum communication infrastructure, and digital skills.

It will be implemented through work programs and funding schemes involving grant resources (grants and awards), procurement and blended finance (mix grant and financial instruments), and collaboration with existing public-private partnerships (ex. Art. 187 TFEU).

The program will stimulate investment in five specific areas as provided by EU Regulation 2021/694:

1. for **High performance computing** (?2.2 billion) through the coordination of data infrastructures. The deployment of resources will be entrusted to the European High Performance Computing (EuroHPC);
2. for **Artificial Intelligence** (2.1 billion euros) it is foreseen to strengthen and integrate existing networks and develop new systems of algorithms and data structures accessible to the public;
3. for **Cybersecurity and Trust** (?1.7 billion) to support Member States in the procurement of advanced cybersecurity systems and tools also in relation to compliance with EU Directive 2016/1148 on cybersecurity;
4. for **Advanced Digital Skills** (580 million euros), the development of training systems for students, workers and entrepreneurs with the aim of strengthening digital skills on the job is envisaged;
5. for **Digital Interoperability** (1.1 billion euros), it is intended to encourage the spread of digital technologies throughout the economy, public administration and SMEs.

For Artificial Intelligence, Cybersecurity, and Interoperability, most of the actions will be implemented under the direct management of the European Commission (DG-CONNECT) or under the indirect management of the Executive Agency for Health and Digital Affairs (HaDEA).

Some actions planned for interoperability, for example those related to the **Green Deal** (such as the creation of Digital Twins through the Destination Earth Initiative (DestinE)), will be implemented through agreements with ESA, ECMWF and EUMETSAT.

2. The Cybersecurity Work Program 2021-2022.

The **Cybersecurity Work Program 2021-2022** aims to support the implementation of cybersecurity infrastructure and strengthen its adoption, particularly in the sectors most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting economic crisis. It also aims to support the implementation of relevant EU legislation and policy initiatives: in particular the cybersecurity

strategy, the NIS.

The program will be implemented by the Expertise Center for Technology and Research (ECCC) on behalf of the European Commission.

The Digital Innovation Hub Programme 2021-2023

The **Digital Innovation Hub 2021-2022** program is focused on the networking of Innovation Hubs identified by the Member States (at least one per country), having an adequate organizational and financial structure. The network will be funded with non-repayable resources addressed to DIHs and aimed at the digital transformation of companies (especially SMEs). Central will be the exchange of information and good practices between DIH and companies from different regions and EU countries, support on projects of Artificial Intelligence, high performance computing and cybersecurity.

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