Digital Partnerships in Action - DPA
Funded by the European Union

Event Summary – EU-ROK Stakeholders Roundtable. April 29, 2025

The EU–Republic of Korea (ROK) Stakeholders Consultation Roundtable, held online on 29 April 2025, brought together over 115 participants from government, academia, and industry, and academia to jointly advance strategic collaboration under the EU–ROK Digital Partnership.

The roundtable focused on key digital domains: Semiconductors, Quantum technologies & innovation, Cybersecurity, Data governance, Artificial Intelligence (AI), and 5G/6G Connectivity.

Co-organised by the European Union and ROK counterparts together with the Digital Partnerships in Action (DPA) project, the event reinforced strong bilateral interest in deepening digital ties, with stakeholders agreeing to regular consultations to shape the EU–Korea Digital Partnership's strategic direction.

Opening Session:

Opening remarks by representatives of the European Commission and EU Delegation to the Republic of Korea and of the Government of the Republic of Korea underscored the importance of mutual trust and shared innovation for achieving digital sovereignty.

Stakeholder Perspectives on the Digital Partnership:

Speakers from Industry Stakeholders from the EU and the Republic of Korea discussed the Digital Partnership's role in aligning standards, supporting SMEs, and facilitating regulatory convergence. Areas of interest included AI governance, digital trade, co-innovation alliances, and public–private pilot initiatives.

Representatives of European Industry stakeholders emphasised Korea's strategic role in the EU's tech ecosystem and advocated for joint platforms for AI and cloud interoperability. Stakeholders from ROK public sector confirmed the commitment to co-regulation, sector-specific roundtables, and alignment in standards (e.g., CRA). To this end it was proposed to organise sector-specific roundtables to advance cooperation. EU industry stakeholders further underlined the importance of regulatory harmonisation and innovation-enabling policies, urging support for SMEs and industry access, emphasizing the need for consistent rules to help businesses scale. Industry Stakeholders from ROK highlighted the digital readiness gap among Korean SMEs and proposed EU collaborations for AI and cloud integration.

- https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/partnerships
- https://www.linkedin.com/company/digital-partnerships-in-action
- https://x.com/DPAinnovation
- https://eprd.pl/en/dpa

DPA areas of strategic support:

Policy Advice
Regulatory Convergence, Standard Harmonisation, Ethical frameworks; Digital Services Interoperability

Technology Diplomacy
Artificial Intelligence (AI); Semiconductors; Data Governance and Online Platforms; Digital Identity and Interoperability; Quantum Technologies and High-Performance Computing; Cybersecurity, Digital Connectivity:5G/6G Arctic Submarine Cables

Research Cooperation
Facilitate networking and partnership-building between academic and industry organisations including through Study Visits, Outreach and Joint Networking Events

Sectoral Deep-Dives

Semiconductors

EU and Korea emphasized complementarity in semiconductors, focusing on AI chips, advanced packaging, and resilient supply chains. Both representatives of ROK and EU public and private stakeholders outlined complementary strategies, highlighting global interdependence and joint goals in fabless R&D, supply chain transparency, and packaging innovation. Korea's mega-cluster development and the EU Chips Act offer platforms for strategic cooperation.

Quantum Technologies

Representatives from EU and ROK private and public sectors described robust bilateral engagement through joint workshops and standards collaboration. Opportunities lie in Horizon Europe calls, high Technological Readiness Level (TRL 4–6+), and standard-setting for quantum communication and encryption. Korea's representatives shared its roadmap, and EU stakeholders called for advancing TRLs, co-developing standards, and aligning on Intellectual Property (IP) and trade policies.

Cybersecurity

Discussions by ROK and EU public and private actors focused on harmonizing Internet of Things (IoT) and software certification standards between the EU's Cyber Resilience Act (CRA) and Korea's frameworks. Proposals included joint Software Bills Of Materials (SBOM) protocols, skills development exchanges, and intelligence-sharing pilots. Emphasis was placed on public–private cooperation and certification.

Data Governance

Representatives of European and Korean stakeholders introduced frameworks for secure data federation. Korea is preparing to host the Gaia-X Hub Korea and integrate with the EU's data space architecture. With Korea establishing a local GAIA-X hub, both sides aim to align certification and trust mechanisms, support semantic data interoperability, and pilot joint use cases in sectors like energy and mobility, with ongoing discussions on adequacy and participation in EU initiatives that are seen as promising next steps.

Artificial Intelligence

Representatives of European and Korean stakeholders explored mutual interest in safe, explainable AI and foundational models for robotics. Korea presented its AI certification scheme and safety mandates, while ADRA advocated interoperability and SME access to AI sandboxes. Best practice sharing and coordination on AI regulations (e.g., EU AI Act) were encouraged.

5G/6G Connectivity

Researchers from EU and ROK involved in the 6Garrow Project discussed AI-native 6G architectures, testbed integration, and shared standards for low-latency, energy-efficient communication. Both parties support cross-border network federation and joint talent development initiatives. Both sides aim to influence global standards via ITU/3GPP and promote interoperability, spectrum alignment, and testbed federation.

Representatives of the European Commission and ROK Government concluded the roundtable underlying that it demonstrated strong momentum for a structured EU–Korea digital alliance, emphasizing mutual trust, shared standards, and practical implementation. Across sectors, stakeholders affirmed the need for continued dialogue, regulatory convergence, and deepened industry-academic-government cooperation. This event set the stage for future initiatives under the Digital Partnership and strengthened both regions' digital sovereignty and global competitiveness.