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Securing Europe's Future: Strengthening ICT Competitiveness for Economic and National Security

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Brussels, 2 December 2024 - Europe's ICT sector is no longer merely an economic pillar but rather a strategic asset crucial for national security. [This Policy Brief](#) identifies two concerns linking technology and national security: **the exploitation of ICT as a gateway to critical infrastructure** and **foreign nations' weaponisation of trade and technological dependencies in ICT**. These two challenges involve distinct nations and demand different approaches.

To address these challenges, the EU must take decisive steps. ***"The EU should diminish the reliance on Chinese telecommunications equipment within its networks and accelerate the deployment of 5G"***, says Fredrik Erixon, a lead author of the Policy Brief. And adds, ***"While reducing or removing Chinese telecommunications equipment from its networks will take years, a more rapid rollout of 5G can be reached now"***. To achieve this goal, the EU should encourage the scale and profitability of its telecom operators.

Moreover, the EU heavily depends on US companies for a substantial share of its cloud-based online services. However, it is improbable that the US would impose restrictions on these exports to the EU, as replicating the infrastructure required to deliver cloud-based online services would involve immense costs. To achieve technological leadership, the EU must prioritise emerging technologies such as 6G, XG, AI, and quantum computing, which will underpin future commercial and military innovations.

"The EU should strengthen its leadership position in the development of technologies for advanced mobile communication, including 5G, 6G, and XG. This is an imperative for economic and security reasons. The war in Ukraine has demonstrated that communication technologies are as critical as tanks and

artillery. A thriving EU ICT sector is one of Europe's best security guarantees" emphasises Oscar Guinea, co-author of the study.

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