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Answer given by Ms Zaharieva
on behalf of the European Commission
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The Commission ensures that centrally managed research and innovation (R&I) flagship projects deliver European added value – addressing cross-border challenges that no single Member State can tackle alone. These projects, enablers of innovation, are strategic public investments through which Europe can foster competitiveness, technological excellence and global leadership, while supporting European core values such as sustainability and equality. Their competitive selection and independent evaluation ensure their impact, excellence and efficient implementation. EU R&I funding boosts company performance and delivers high economic returns – up to EUR 11 per EUR 1 invested¹.

Beyond funding, the EU's regulatory framework promotes technologically neutral R&I in key areas such as the Copyright Directive², the Data Act³ and the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Act⁴ to ensure fair and competitive conditions. The EU also stimulates demand through the start-up and scale-up strategy and the forthcoming European Innovation Act, helping innovators to grow and compete globally.

The Commission's strategic initiative, the 'Competitiveness Compass'⁵ strengthens the EU's technological independence and competitiveness by investing in critical technologies like AI, quantum computing and cloud infrastructure, enhancing innovation capacity and long-term economic benefits. The AI Continent Action Plan⁶ recognises the need to incentivise large investments in cloud and edge capacity and announced the Cloud and AI Development Act, which will tackle obstacles for the development of cloud and data centre infrastructure. This will allow the EU to at least triple its data centre capacity within the next five to seven years and support technological sovereignty⁷.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_25_1115.

² <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/copyright-legislation>.

³ <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/data-act>.

⁴ <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/regulatory-framework-ai>.

⁵ https://commission.europa.eu/topics/eu-competitiveness/competitiveness-compass_en.

⁶ <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/ai-continent-action-plan>.

⁷ While the EU remains open to providers that comply with its rules and values, technological sovereignty will require highly secured EU-based capacity.