

ETNO launches 2019 strategic plans, focuses on global digital leadership and innovation

Limassol (Cyprus), 26 October 2018 – The Members and Observers of ETNO, the Association representing Europe’s leading providers of digital networks and services, met today in Cyprus for the 56th General Assembly. During the meeting, chaired by Cyprus leading telecom operator **Cyta**, ETNO announced its strategic plans for 2019 – including the launch of an Artificial Intelligence Task Force. Members also renewed the mandates of the Chairman of the Executive Board, Phillip Malloch, and of the Director General, Lise Fuhr.

2019: focus on global digital leadership and innovation

2019 might bring about significant change in the EU and globally, with the European Elections likely to reshape the political climate and evolving sentiments as to the role of technology in society. With a view of creating a positive policy climate for innovation, investment and digital citizenship, ETNO will put forward two main pillars for its action.

(1) An industrial policy for global digital leadership. The new EU term is a unique opportunity to give Europe a new industrial policy for global leadership in digital technologies. Europe should create more space for private initiative and promote investment and innovation. New services and infrastructure development should be also prioritised, aligning regulatory practices with political ambitions for European digital leadership.

(2) A focus on innovation, including the launch of ETNO’s Artificial Intelligence Task Force. The role of digital and telecom innovation in empowering citizens will also be put at the core of our work next year. This includes the launch of the Artificial Intelligence Task Force, which starts operating already this year with a view to provide an exchange of knowledge among AI professionals and lead the corresponding policy debate. The Task Force is chaired by Ieva Martinkenaite, Vice President at Telenor Group.

Preparing ETNO for the future

As digital markets and EU policymaking face fast-paced change, the General Assembly approved internal organisational improvements, effective immediately, to support leadership in digital policy and best meet the external challenges and opportunities.

Alessandro Gropelli is now ETNO’s Director of Strategy and Communications: in this role he will also be deputy to the Director General and co-lead ETNO’s strategic plans for 2019. **Paolo Grassia** is now ETNO’s Head of Regulation and Advocacy, a role that foresees the coordination of the Association’s engagement with political stakeholders, in particular the European Parliament before and after the EU elections. **Marta Capelo**, ETNO’s Director of Public Policy, is now in lead of the new “Framework Implementation Project”, which will provide an additional and enhanced focus on the EECC implementation and other processes, in the context of evolving investment models.

The General Assembly also approved the renewal of mandates of Chairman to the Executive Board, **Phillip Malloch**, for a duration of 1 year, and of the Director General, **Lise Fuhr**, for a 3-years term.

Lise Fuhr, Director General of ETNO, commented: *“The European Digital Single Market and technology developments constitute a major enabler of societal opportunities. We will make it our main task for 2019 to champion EU integration and technological progress to the benefit of European citizens and businesses”.*