

Athens, 3 April 2025  
Protocol Number 151/IS

**To:** Members of the bureau of the European Democracy Shield

**Subject:** GFOSS Proposals to the European Democracy Shield Committee

Open Technologies Alliance (GFOSS), as an umbrella organization for open technologies in Greece, submits the following proposals within the framework of the public consultation for the European Democracy Shield. These proposals focus on highlighting the importance of **open public governance of the digital infrastructures on which democracy operates in Europe**, converging with the strategic approaches of the EuroStack initiative (<https://euro-stack.eu/>) for digital independence in Europe.

In the current geopolitical situation, the defense of democracy requires, more than ever, the transition from today's digital social networking infrastructures exclusively controlled by private interests to publicly governed infrastructures. Such an approach requires a comprehensive strategy covering all levels of the digital stack, from raw materials and semiconductors to network infrastructures, cloud computing, software, data and artificial intelligence systems.

GFOSS believes that the future of European democracy in the digital age depends on transitioning to a more open, transparent and democratically governed digital infrastructure ecosystem. Our proposals are based on six fundamental principles: independence and security, interoperability, sustainability, data as a common good, decentralized infrastructures and inclusive governance.

## 1. Public Governance of Digital Infrastructures

### Proposals

1. **Institutional Support for Open Protocols:** Creation of a European framework for supporting and funding open communication protocols (such as ActivityPub and AT Protocol) that enable decentralized operation of social networks.
2. **European Fund for Public Digital Infrastructures:** Establishment of a dedicated fund to finance non-profit organizations that develop and maintain public digital infrastructures.

3. **Promotion of Interoperability:** Establishment of a legislative framework requiring major social networking platforms to support open protocols, allowing users to communicate across different platforms.
4. **"Europe First" Strategy in Public Procurement of Digital Infrastructures for Democracy:** Public procurement should prioritize European solutions for critical digital infrastructures that support the functioning of democratic institutions.

## 2. Transparency and Accountability in Social Media

### Proposals

1. **Increased Platform Responsibility:** Adoption of a stronger accountability framework for social media platforms whereby their owners will bear greater responsibility for the spread of misinformation, hate speech, and divisive-polarizing discourse.
2. **Algorithm Transparency:** Mandatory publication of the basic operating principles of content recommendation algorithms and open availability of relevant data to enable independent research. Algorithmic transparency should be supported by data exchange systems (Data Commons) that facilitate research and monitoring while ensuring the protection of personal data and privacy.
3. **Open Source Tools for Combating Misinformation and Promoting Democratic Participation:** Development of open source tools for detecting and flagging misinformation, utilizing European artificial intelligence systems. We propose the creation of minimum viable products (MVPs) through open innovation competitions in the context of member countries participation in the **Open Government Partnership (OGP)**, with a specific focus on combating misinformation and promoting democratic participation. These tools will utilize European, multilingual AI models developed through initiatives such as **OpenGPT-X** as well as **European AI Factories** and **European Digital Innovation Hubs (EDIHs)**.

## 3. Digital Identity with Respect for Privacy

### Proposal

1. **European Digital Identification Framework:** Development of a European digital identification framework that allows citizens to verify their identity on social networks and all online services while maintaining control over their personal data with privacy protection.

## 4. Enhancing Digital Literacy and Civil Society

### Proposals

1. **Open Educational Material:** Development and provision of open educational material to enhance digital literacy and critical thinking across all age groups.

2. **Support for Open Source Communities:** Targeted funding for open source communities that develop and operate alternative decentralized social networking platforms.
3. **Network of Misinformation Monitoring Organizations:** Creation of a pan-European network of independent organizations that use open tools and methodologies to identify and address misinformation.

## 5. Promoting Research and Innovation

### Proposals

1. **European Research Program:** Creation of a dedicated research program with an adequate budget for the development of decentralized social networking technologies and tools to combat misinformation using open standards. The program could utilize existing European Supercomputer (EuroHPC) infrastructures as well the 7 European AI Factories for the development of specialized AI models for detecting cases of misinformation and enhancing citizen participation.
2. **Open Data for Research:** Establishment of a framework for the safe and anonymous provision of data from social networking platforms to researchers, in accordance with FAIR principles. This initiative should operate alongside proposed European data exchange platforms, with defined implementation milestones within a 5-year timeframe.
3. **Public-Private-Academic-Non-Profit Sector Collaboration:** Promotion of collaborations between multiple stakeholders from the quadruple helix of innovation for the development of open technology solutions that enhance the democratic functioning of the digital space. Such collaborations can adopt a governance model emphasizing agile implementation, transparency, and prompt response to emerging challenges.

The policy proposals that will stem from the **European Democracy Shield** should be considered an integral part of a broader strategy for Europe's **digital sovereignty**, with common funding mechanisms and governance model. Only through a coherent approach can Europe ensure its technological sovereignty, the protection of fundamental rights and ultimately the resilience of its democratic institutions in the digital age.

Sincerely,



Board Chair  
Professor Ioannis Stamelos

