

Statement on Technological Sovereignty¹

In the context of growing geopolitical rivalries and the pandemic, the concept of technological sovereignty has emerged to become a key political theme. This concept is directly relevant to the European Innovation Council and the EIC pilot Advisory Board has concluded on the following main messages.

1. As a fundamental principle, the *EIC should take a positive and proactive approach to giving as much freedom/ opportunities as possible to innovators*, opening opportunities for them to scale up in global markets, attracting international investors and startups to Europe, not foreclosing options for international investors or partners, and avoiding restricting IPR & investment conditions.
2. Although there is no official definition, *technological sovereignty* should be understood as *avoiding situations where the EU is reliant on a sole, or limited number of, third country suppliers for technologies* which are critical to startups and to the EU's economic and societal wellbeing. Such cases should be assessed against three questions:
 - i. Do we have the technology in Europe?
 - ii. If not, do we have several suppliers from stable reliable countries?
 - iii. If still not, do we have unfettered guaranteed access to monopoly or oligopoly suppliers from a single country (often US or China)?
3. The *EIC has a key role to play in building technological sovereignty* as an initiator, investor and ecosystem builder, in particular for future and emerging technologies which could become critical. This should complement initiatives in other EU policy fields such as the identification/definition of critical technologies for industry policy, competition policy, national policies, defence, etc.
4. *EIC needs a working list of potential critical technologies for European technological sovereignty*. This should be based on existing assessments. The United States have already established such a list and set aside \$ 100 billion to guarantee US technological independence. EU policies (industry policy, key enabling technologies) are also relevant.
5. *EIC should proactively support projects/ startups that have the potential to become leaders in the field of these critical technologies* (starting with the targeted challenge funding in the EIC 2021 Work Programme), and, as a given technology is never in isolation, to link them into ecosystems (e.g. role of Programme managers, Business Acceleration Services). The underlying objective is to promote the emergence of new value chains featuring high added value on European territory.
6. In order to deal with risks that may arise, *the EIC needs tools for exceptional cases* where the acquisition of technologies/ companies by non-European actors would represent a threat to technological sovereignty. Such tools need further development and may include specific terms and conditions for investments by the EIC Fund, and IPR provisions in grant agreements concerning the transfer of ownership and/or exclusive licensing.

¹ Annex to the Statement of the EIC pilot Advisory Board at the launch of the EIC