



EU telcos: international connectivity can be a booster for Europe's digital leadership

Brussels, 10 December 2020 – ETNO, the Association representing Europe's leading telecom operators, welcomes the renewed focus on international connectivity, as per today's announcement by Minister Pedro Nuno Santos at the Telecommunications Council, in the context of the upcoming Portuguese Presidency of the EU.

At a time in which more and more human activities are empowered by connectivity and digitalisation, laying new submarine cables becomes a concrete way to empower businesses and citizens across countries. In addition, it carries positive geopolitical and industrial significance. More in specific, we believe it will be an essential component of Europe's digital leadership strategy, along with the ongoing work on 5G, cloud, AI and the data economy.

The work to strengthen international connectivity through the development of new cables and the maintenance of the current ones is an incredibly investment-intensive one. In addition, the governance around deployment and operations is complex.

For this reason, we welcome the renewed focus of the Portuguese Presidency of the EU on the subject and we call for involving European market players and stakeholders in the debate as from its very early stages.

As many big tech companies work on similar projects, a close dialogue between the EU industry and the European institutions can be a tool to identify any specific needs of private-public cooperation on this issue. This will be of help in further coordinating and strengthening the European activities in the field of submarine cables, including making their roll-out smoother and the operations easier.

For media inquiries: Alessandro Gropelli, gropelli@etno.eu, +32 476 941839