

PRESS RELEASE : OFE welcomes the European Cloud Partnership “Trusted Cloud Europe” vision document

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Today's European Cloud Partnership Steering Board announcement on Trusted Cloud for Europe (TCE) is to be welcomed. TCE is a tangible and important move to develop a higher level framework within which the recommendations from the Commission's Cloud Specific Interest Groups will be positioned. It is right that industry is very closely involved here to ensure that the opportunity in Europe resulting from Cloud based services is maximised.

OFE find much to support in the text, recognising as it does that Europe has to work within a global dimension, and that active encouragement of best practice and use of industry recognised, global open standards will be fundamental. Concerns that in building 'trust', politicians in Europe might be tempted to adopt unrealistic and unachievable protectionist stances such either a 'Fortress Europe' or 'Schengen data area' seem to have been dismissed and indeed encouragement is made to phase out data location restrictions, and replace formal legal requirements by the corresponding functional requirements, so as to allow all cloud providers to compete on equal and fair terms. We agree such an approach is conducive to supporting innovation, and enables public policy objectives to be more effectively reached, without sacrificing privacy concerns.

Equally important is the fundamental recognition that the TCE must be a non-legislative and voluntary initiative, relying on a voluntary adherence and participation from cloud providers and users that see a benefit in participating in it.

More debatable is the intention to make TCE a recognisable brand and a mark of quality creating an additional selling proposition on the global market. That will be a difficult balance with the need to ensure that the cost of entry and stated emphasis on a voluntary policy does not limit the opportunity for SME's to compete on a level playing field.

OFE continues to believe that the opportunity for cloud services in Europe has to be a two way process, building on the total concept of openness to foster trust and confidence for all suppliers within Europe, but also creating an invigorated market so that European SMEs can maximise their opportunity on a global basis without boundaries.

So at this stage OFE strongly endorses the intentions and fundamental approach outline but cautiously recognises the 'devil will be in the detail' and the high degree of debate and action necessary to convert this strategy into implementation. One major concern is time scales – the market for cloud services expands incrementally as we speak and will not wait for government action. OFE believes many of the open principles it put forth in its Open Cloud Declaration ([link](#)) at the end of last year remain valid and can be used now to ensure suppliers and users can enter commitments today based on a common understanding of openness, interoperability, and mutual respect.

OFE looks forward to continue working with the Commission and other organisations in order to advance the TCE into its next stages of development.

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