

Open letter: Harnessing open source AI to advance digital sovereignty

November 13, 2025

Dear President Macron,
Dear Chancellor Merz,
Dear President von der Leyen,

Europe is at a crossroads. The Summit on European Digital Sovereignty marks an important milestone for the EU and its member states in aligning on a shared strategy for achieving real and lasting European digital sovereignty. As the EU pursues the goal of digital sovereignty, we urge you to harness open source — that is, technology that is free to use, inspect, adapt, and share — as a key enabler of this strategy.

Europe cannot buy sovereignty off a shelf, it has to build it. In an age of geopolitical volatility and rapid innovation Europe must play to its strengths, including world-leading researchers and a rich history of open source development. It faces a choice: use these strengths to carve out its distinct place in the global AI ecosystem or settle for copying the playbooks of already dominant actors.

At their heart, **closed systems create dependency, open systems create capacity.**

Investment into the full open source AI stack, from AI models to data and software tooling, is a strategic lever. If digital sovereignty means creating a Europe that is resilient and benefits from choice, security, and self-determination, then **open source is a critical force multiplier that enables Europe to do more with less.**

Open source AI, and open source technology more broadly, is not just a strategic asset benefiting governments, businesses, and people. If underpinned by a clear commitment to values that are at the heart of the European project — including cultural diversity, fundamental rights, environmental sustainability, and people's privacy and security — open source can help embed these into the technologies that will shape our future.

We, the undersigned, represent a diverse coalition of organisations across industry, the open source community, and civil society — many of whom build and maintain leading-edge open source technology. **With this letter, we put forward a concrete plan to ensure Europe’s technological future is open, trusted, and its own.**

The importance of open source in achieving digital sovereignty

Boosting and utilising the open source AI ecosystem will support the EU and its member states in strengthening their digital sovereignty in four key ways:

- **Reduce Dependency and Increase Strategic Autonomy:** Open source technology enables European governments and enterprises to freely use, adapt, and host technology on their own terms, using infrastructure of their own choosing. By making it easier to switch and by fostering more competition, this prevents vendor lock-in, increases choice, and reduces dependencies throughout the technological supply chain.
- **Boost European Capability and Competitiveness:** Open source compounds progress and boosts European innovators’ productivity by providing them with reusable building blocks that they can use and tailor to their needs, without having to reinvent the wheel. It helps EU startups, SMEs, and researchers go further, faster, rapidly delivering innovative technology.
- **Build Global Leadership and Influence:** Open source enables Europe to collaborate globally while retaining autonomy. The technology can be developed and maintained across borders, harnessing expertise from around the world without requiring trust to verify its security. Investing in open source AI can also strengthen partnerships with like-minded nations — all while influencing global standards, facilitating interoperability, and making it easier for others to build on European technology.
- **Promote European Values and Cultural Diversity:** Open source and open data can safeguard linguistic and cultural diversity by making European language and cultural data more broadly available and by enabling local communities to adapt AI to their needs and context. It is also inherently more transparent and enables independent audits — key to AI’s safety and security.

Five actions to harness the potential of open source AI for Europe's ambitions

To leverage the value of open source AI for the EU's ambitions on AI and digital sovereignty, we call on Member State governments and the European institutions to champion open source through the following initial actions:

- 1. Leverage the public sector's buying power to scale and ensure the sustainability of open source AI initiatives:** Improve tendering processes and templates to better account for open source technologies and reduce administrative obstacles for open source vendors, rather than structurally favoring proprietary technology. Consider the benefits of open source with regard to sovereignty, total cost, and interoperability as part of the procurement process.
- 2. Mobilise funding to incubate, develop, and maintain an open source AI stack:** Create designated funding lines and incentives to support the development and maintenance of critical and high-impact open source AI and other foundational open source technologies, including through the creation of an EU Sovereign Tech Fund, the European Competitiveness Fund, and national funding instruments.
- 3. Facilitate access to computing infrastructure for open source AI research and development:** Reserve capacity and facilitate reliable, unbureaucratic access to publicly funded compute, for example through AI factories, for open source and public interest AI research, development, and deployment.
- 4. Unlock data for open source AI development while protecting privacy and other rights:** Remove barriers to access and reuse of publicly funded, public domain, or other non-sensitive public sector data for open source AI developers. Accelerate the deployment of data sharing mechanisms and infrastructure, such as Common European Data Spaces.
- 5. Build capacity in the public and private sectors to leverage the power of open source:** Mainstream support for open source AI developers and users within existing governance mechanisms, including European Digital Innovation Hubs and supervisory authorities. Raise awareness and foster sharing of best practices around the use of open source AI.

We urge the EU's leaders to use this five-point plan as a pathway to build a future it can trust, shape and truly call its own.

Sincerely,

Mozilla

ADAPT Centre (Trinity College Dublin)	Mistral AI
AlgorithmWatch	Nextcloud GmbH
APELL – The European Open Source Software Business Association	Open Future
Bertelsmann Stiftung	Open Knowledge Foundation
Black Forest Labs	Open Knowledge Foundation Deutschland
Common Crawl Foundation	Open Markets Institute
COMMUNIA	Open Source Business Alliance (OSBA)
Creative Commons	Open Source Initiative (OSI)
Demos	Open-Xchange
Digital Intimacy Coalition	OpenMined
Ecosia GmbH	Pleias
Element	Probabl
EleutherAI	Public AI
Future of Tech Institute	PublicSpaces
German AI Association	Red Hat Ltd.
Hugging Face	Renaissance Numérique
iconomy	Stichting Code for NL
Innovate Europe Foundation (IE.F)	Waag Futurelab
Kyutai	Wikimedia Deutschland e. V.
LAION	Wikimedia Europe
LINAGORA	Wikimédia France
Metagov	Xnet, Institute for Democratic Digitalisation