The Initiative: For a European Civic Artificial Intelligence

Eumans is preparing a European Citizens' Initiative (ECI), the only tool in the EU treaties that lets one million citizens, across at least seven member states, put a proposal directly on the European Commission's desk.

No ECI has ever tried to shape how the EU spends its own money. We think it's time one did, because if Europe is serious enough to invest in AI for defence, it must be equally serious about investing in AI for democracy.

The Initiative rests on four connected demands.

1. A European Civic Artificial Intelligence

Europe cannot outsource the intelligence that will increasingly run its public life. It cannot delegate this to companies whose business model depends on extraction, or to states whose model depends on control. We need an **Artificial Intelligence ecosystem** that is **European, public, decentralised and open source from the ground up**: trained on data the public can inspect, aligned to democratic values instead of engagement metrics, and designed to strengthen people's ability to decide, not to decide for them. This is the difference between a **Civic AI** and **an algorithmic state**: one gives citizens more power over their own lives; the other quietly takes it away.

2. A CERN for Artificial Intelligence

Sixty years ago, Europe pooled its resources to build CERN, giving the world open, shared, publicly owned scientific infrastructure that no single country — and no single company — could ever have built alone. AI needs the same leap. Europe already has the seeds of it: supercomputers like Leonardo, the emerging network of European AI Factories, universities and public research centres hungry for computing power they cannot currently afford.

What's missing is the political will to connect them into a single, publicly owned infrastructure — open to researchers, civic technologists, small innovators and public administrations alike, not reserved for the handful of companies that can already afford frontier-scale compute.

This is not a new idea: it has already been promoted by the European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, by CEPS, and some initiatives - such as CAIRNE and RAISE - are already in place. Yet, they mainly consist of confederations of laboratories and loose research networks. A proper **CERN for AI** needs **solid, interconnected compute infrastructure** (e.g. AI factories and Giga Factories), **high-quality data** (e.g. Data Spaces, Data Labs, High Value Datasets), and a **harmonised, open, research-centric governance model**.

To ensure this is achieved, we ask the **European Union** to invest **€100 billion between 2027 and 2032,** even with public-private partnerships, but building on the **upcoming InvestAI Strategy**.

3. A European Sovereign Fund for AI and Data

Sovereign wealth funds have always been built on finite physical resources like oil, gas, and minerals. Europe's AI fund would be built on something we generate every single day, simply by living our digital lives: data, and the collective intelligence that comes from connecting it.

Therefore, we ask that, within the **new Multiannual Financial Framework, 10 out of the 451 billion euros** of the European Competitiveness Fund (namely, 10 of the **51.5 billion euros** destined for Digital Leadership) be allocated to launch a **European Sovereign Fund for AI,** to be coupled with the same amount of private investments. This is in line with the European Commission's own Tech Sovereignty Package, which refers to the creation of an EU equity/venture-capital vehicle for tech, without a firm quantification — though it does estimate around €200 billion will be needed just to expand data centre capacity by 2036.

What we ask for is not a random number. The EuroStack initiative - encompassing all digital technologies - is expected to require around **€300 billion by 2035**, with an **initial €10 billion** channeled into a European technology fund as a first step. While EuroStack covers the whole digital stack (chips, cloud, connectivity, data), sovereign AI is one of its central pillars. The plan also calls for investment across semiconductors, cloud infrastructure, sovereign AI platforms, and federated data spaces. Similarly, **FEPS (Foundation for European Progressive Studies)** proposed creating a €10 billion EU Digital Sovereignty Fund to build digital public infrastructure and digital commons. **McKinsey** suggested an EU-level sovereign AI fund investing €15–20 billion a year in compute, foundation models, and data spaces through 2030.

The first allocation could also be done within the **European InvestAI strategy**, but it does not completely overlap with it. Indeed, a **European Sovereign Fund for AI and Data** must include a long-term sustainability plan. Eumans then asks that the sustainability of the Fund be ensured by allocating **2%** of the European taxes on data-intense revenues (e.g. BigTech Platforms, data centres, supercomputers, AI factories, etc.). This could be achieved in two ways:

- By allocating **2% of national corporate income tax**, **VAT**, and **Digital Services Taxes** into a Pan-European Fund, thus opening to all countries involved in the Council of Europe;
- By creating a **pan-European** AI Compute Tax **and** Data Extraction Tax.

Moreover, the Fund should finance the **Civic Artificial Intelligence Ecosystem** and the **CERN for AI** described above, and channel public investment into public-interest ownership models - cooperatives, public-private partnerships, purpose-driven companies, decentralised non-profits - instead of concentrating yet more power in a handful of shareholders. If the fund is built on a public resource, its returns, financial and democratic, must be public too.

4. A Genuinely Different Model of Technological Development

None of this matters if Europe simply rebuilds Big Tech with its own flag on it (which is failing to do). What we need is a different development model, not a state-run copy of Silicon Valley:

- **open source and interoperable** by default, so that no single actor - public or private — can capture the technology that runs our democracy;
- **federal decentralisation**, built on the twin principles of federation and subsidiarity, where local systems solve local problems and only connect upward when a problem genuinely exceeds local capacity, so that no single, all-powerful AI ever replaces the many;
- and **meaningful citizen participation** in shaping the infrastructure itself - not consultation after the fact, but co-authorship from day one, the way Taiwan's citizens rewrote a trade deal from inside an occupied parliament, or Tokyo's and California's citizens used AI-assisted deliberation to shape real public policy.

We then ask that the emerging European Digital Infrastructure Consortiums (EDICs) reflect this approach, especially the upcoming Digital Commons EDIC.

As the digital democracy pioneer Audrey Tang puts it: the superintelligence we need already exists - it's called *We, the People*. Democracy is not a value we bolt onto technology after the fact. It is the architecture itself.