

CHARTER FOR DIGITAL INCLUSION IN BELGIUM

A COMMITMENT BY THE PRIVATE, PUBLIC AND SOCIAL SECTORS IN BELGIUM FOR DIGITAL INCLUSION

Digital is now omnipresent in our society. It doesn't matter whether it is making an appointment with the doctor, registering your child at school, making a bank transfer or filing a tax return, taking online classes or applying for a certificate from the municipality, the digital way is often the easiest, fastest, cheapest and sometimes even the only way available. The reality is digital inclusion is increasingly becoming a basic requirement for full social inclusion.

As many as four out of ten Belgians risk being excluded from our increasingly digital society. Moreover, the digital divide affects certain vulnerable groups more than others. The reasons for this are often a lack of sufficient digital skills, little or no access to a device or an Internet connection, digital stress when using digital tools and concerns about security and privacy online. This is a reality that is further reinforced by the increased attempts at online fraud and phishing.

To give as many Belgians as possible access to the digital world, it is important to promote greater digital inclusion. For this, we need to continue working on awareness-raising initiatives and together undertake concrete actions that will support people in their integration into the digital society in the short and long term. This is in line with SDG 10 ('reduce inequality') which aims to reduce inequalities and promote inclusion for all.

We are convinced that better cooperation between the private, public and social sectors, as well as their collective efforts, will promote digital inclusion in Belgian society, including for the most vulnerable.

This Charter reflects the commitment of the signatory organisations to work together to promote digital inclusion at all levels in Belgian society. Within this framework, the signatory organisations commit to formulating objectives, taking concrete measures and defining positive actions.

By signing this Charter, each signatory organisation¹ commits to:

1. Identify best practices to improve digital inclusion and share them with other signatories;
2. Identify, together with the other signatories, potential barriers to digital inclusion and define common actions to overcome them;
3. Ensure that the top management of their own organisation makes the commitment and moves forward;
4. Improve digital inclusion within their own organisation by promoting internal training and sharing actions and progress;

¹ In this document, the term "organisation" includes companies in both the public and private sector, as well as non-profit organisations.

5. Promote digital inclusion outside its own organisation in order to increase the number of signatories to the Charter and its impact;
6. Support campaigns that seek to make digital inclusion a priority, since the real scale of the problem, of the groups affected by the digital divide, is still rather unknown by the general public;
7. Gradually introduce within its own organisation a procedure that will enable it to assess the extent to which it is promoting digital inclusion to its employees, customers and beneficiaries;
8. Take actions to strengthen trust in digital tools, to increase people's online safety and to arm them against potential abuses;
9. Monitor the progress in the implementation of this charter and, after 3 years, co-assess this charter with the other signatories to evaluate the state of play and possible next steps.