The Prague Proposals

The Chairman Statement on Telecommunications Supplier Diversity

Prague 5G Security Conference 2021

Prague, 30 November 2021

PREAMBLE

Like-minded governments share democratic values, a commitment to secure communications, and the recognition that a successful transition to 5G and beyond requires a diverse and competitive marketplace which prevents dependence on a small number of suppliers, particularly those considered to be high risk, or a single country in the telecoms technology supply chain. Open and interoperable telecoms networks support this supplier diversity, contributing to supply chain resiliency and more secure, transparent, and reliable infrastructure. Interoperability is expected to lower barriers to entry and innovation, increase market-based competition, improve network management and security, and reduce costs.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS SUPPLIER DIVERSITY PROPOSALS

The chair therefore affirms the following proposals, which are intended to guide our efforts to advance and promote supplier diversity and open and interoperable networks:

- While industry continues to lead the development of network innovations that support openness and interoperability, governments should actively foster an enabling environment for their successful adoption and growth.

- Governments should consider various policy and/or technical measures as well as appropriately targeted commercial incentives to help realize the potential of open and interoperable networks, such as shared R&D initiatives, international pilots and trials, and other activities to stimulate the market.

- Governments should seek to collaborate with likeminded countries on these activities, and in addressing policy, technical, or market-based barriers to a more diverse telecoms market ecosystem – while ensuring technologically neutral regulatory environments and fair competition. They should also welcome the emergence of diverse market entrants from likeminded countries whose business practices align with these proposals.

- Consistent with the 2019 Prague Proposals and the EU Toolbox for 5G Security, governments should ensure that domestic telecoms networks, including open and interoperable ones, are subject to a rigorous evaluation of equipment and infrastructure suppliers that takes into account risk profiles, including the rule of law, the security environment, ethical supplier and transparent financing practices, and adherence to the latest security standards and best

practices.

- Governments should highlight the importance of security in the development, deployment, and operation of open and interoperable telecoms solutions through such concerted efforts as global research collaboration, so that the emergence of a wider range of suppliers reinforces resilience across the market. Governments should also support approaches to the development of critical and emerging technology that align with universal values, including respect for freedom of expression and privacy.

- Governments should support open, global, industry-led, and inclusive multi-stakeholder approaches for the development of technical standards, including as they relate to telecommunications equipment and services. These international standards will be key enablers to enshrine openness and interoperability in the telecommunications sector, such as through Open Radio Access Networks (Open RAN).

- Governments should engage in good faith with industry, civil society, and other stakeholders to address obstacles to supplier diversity. This includes creating opportunities for public-private dialogue and stakeholder "buy-in," which are necessary to bring about long-term market evolution.

- Governments should encourage network operators, suppliers, and other market actors to consider the expected benefits of utilizing open and interoperable standards-based approaches, so that operators can choose among offerings from multiple suppliers based on performance, pricing, and security.

- Like other stakeholders, governments should recognize that diversifying telecoms infrastructure markets will require long-term effort and commitment. They should also ensure that public policy efforts evolve to accommodate network advancements, increasing digital connectivity needs, and evolving network risks.

The chair welcomes all likeminded countries to join implementing and promoting these proposals on telecommunications supplier diversity. The chair also recognizes the importance of advancing consensus and collaboration on this priority through relevant international fora.