BRUSSELS HOSTS NGI FORUM 2025 WITH FOCUS ON DIGITAL COMMONS

Press release | June 30th, 2025

The 2025 edition of the NGI Forum highlighted the shift from successful experimentation under the NGI initiative to building a unified Open Internet Stack (OIS), aimed at strengthening Europe's digital sovereignty. The forum opened with two insightful panel discussions hosted by the NGI Commons initiative, bringing together experts from diverse fields to explore the future of digital innovation and governance. Since 2018, over €140 million has been invested in more than 1,500 projects, helping to foster dynamic open-source ecosystems across Europe.

With the overarching theme *"Building an Open Internet Stack for European Digital Sovereignty,"* this year's flagship event spotlighted the transition from experimentation to deployment of open, interoperable digital infrastructure. A fundamental component of this vision is the **Digital Commons**: open-source tools and public digital infrastructure developed collaboratively across Europe.

Digital commons as pillars of sovereignty

The Forum's opening sessions, run under the NGI Commons initiative, emphasised the strategic importance of commons-based digital ecosystems. Speakers underscored that robust governance, funding, open standards, and public procurement are essential to elevate digital commons from experimental tools to core public infrastructure, thereby enhancing Europe's autonomy and reducing dependency on non-EU tech platforms.

"Digital commons are not just technological building blocks; they are a critical infrastructure for Europe's digital sovereignty and empowerment of all citizens. The NGI Forum 2025 gave us the opportunity to discuss how we can create a more coherent European funding landscape that bridges both public and private sectors.", commented Dr Monique Calisti, CEO at Martel Innovate, Coordinator of the NGI Commons initiative.

Key session highlights

- **Digital Commons Tools for Building Digital Sovereignty**
  Moderated by Dr. Monique Calisti (Martel Innovate), this session featured a keynote by Sean Bohan (OpenWallet Foundation) and contributions from Denis Jaromil Roio (Dyne.org), Pascal Steichen (Luxembourg House of Cybersecurity), and Karin Lammers. Discussions explored how interoperable digital wallets,

transparent governance, and standardisation can function as public infrastructure for user empowerment.

"*Interoperability is crucial to the future (...) The user experience needs to get infinitely better, and we're seeing that right now with some digital wallets. But this is still early days. We have wallets in production right now around the world. They're being used by real human beings and it's going to get better. It has a brand and reputation. I have a personal bet with the universe that someday a competitive advantage for company A versus company B will be who treats the customer better*". Commented Sean Bohan in his keynote speech.

- **Towards a Strategic Agenda for the Digital Commons**
  Led by Paul Keller (Open Future Foundation), and including Robin Berjon (IPFS Foundation), Lukasz Klejnowski (MEP's office), and Isabelle Zablit Schmitz, the session proposed a strategic roadmap to embed digital commons into the next EU Multiannual Financial Framework. It called for aligning funding, regulation, and technical governance to ensure their viability beyond sporadic innovation.

  "*Europe needs to put its money where the strategic ambitions are. Otherwise this will not work. And finally you will have support for digital Commons needs to scale up existing national initiatives. We see interesting things happening in France. We see interesting things happening in Germany with the sovereign tech agency like, I'm sure there's multiple other examples from other member states,*" said Paul Keller during his introduction to the panel discussion.

Investing in sustainable digital infrastructure

With the shift toward an **Open Internet Stack**, new EU support includes **€10 million** for foundational work and **€14.5 million** for Web 4.0 integration in 2025. This investment is aimed at turning open-source pilot initiatives into reliable, regulation-compliant, and scalable infrastructure.

A collaborative vision for Europe's digital future

Held at the Albert Borschette Congress Centre, the 2025 Forum brought together over 200 in-person participants, including policymakers, researchers, innovators, and civic actors, alongside a broader online audience. Sessions also addressed digital identity, software supply chain security, cybersecurity, AI, open data, and the launch of the first European Open Web Index.

"*Today marks a changeover, from NGI to the Open Internet Stack. We want this community to continue to flourish, not only by developing code, but by ensuring it becomes the foundation for products that people will use, embrace, and promote, in Europe and beyond*" commented Thibaut Kleiner, Director at DG CNECT.

Read more on the NGI Commons website:
https://commons.ngi.eu/2025/06/30/digital-commons-take-centre-stage-at-ngi-forum-2025-opening-in-brussels/

About NGI Forum 2025

The NGI Forum is the Next Generation Internet initiative's flagship event led by the European Commission's DG CONNECT. NGI aims to build a more open, trustworthy, inclusive, and sustainable Internet grounded in European values.

About NGI Commons

NGI Commons is run by a consortium that includes Martel Innovate, who coordinates the project, OpenForum Europe, the Open Future Foundation, the Linux Foundation, and the Centre Internet et Société (CIS) of the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS). The project is a Cooperation and Support Action (CSA) within the Next Generation Internet (NGI) Initiative and will be carried out between January 2024 to December 2026.

About Next Generation Internet (NGI)

NGI Commons is part of the European Commission's Next Generation Internet (NGI) Initiative. The NGI initiative aims to reimagine the internet as an interoperable platform ecosystem that embodies the values of openness, inclusivity, transparency, privacy, and cooperation. The end goal is to create a range of open-source and decentralised solutions, which provide an alternative to mainstream and help achieve digital sovereignty. NGI has already provided 1000+ innovative projects with more than 350 million euros of funding since 2018.

Contact and social media

- Website
  https://commons.ngi.eu
- E-mail
  commons@ngi.eu
- Mastodon
  https://eupolicy.social/@NGICommons
- PeerTube
  https://video.ngi.eu/a/ngicommons/
- LinkedIn
  https://www.linkedin.com/company/ngi-commons
- BlueSky
  https://bsky.app/profile/ngicommons.bsky.social
- Matrix
  https://matrix.to/#/#ngi-commons:matrix.org
- Zenodo |
  https://zenodo.org/communities/ngicommons/

Funded by the European Union

Project funded by
Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra
Swiss Confederation
Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research EAER
State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation SERI

NGI Commons (Open Source and Internet Commons for Europe's Digital Sovereignty) project is funded by the European Union's **Horizon Europe research and innovation programme** under Grant Agreement number 101135279. This work has received funding from the **Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research, and Innovation (SERI)**. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.