
Common statement on the Digital Trade Agreement between the EU and
Singapore, By BEUC, EDRi and ETUC | 7 April 2025

EU-Singapore Digital Trade Agreement: we must do better to protect consumers, workers, and people at large

As discussions on the recently concluded Digital Trade Agreement (DTA) between the EU and Singapore unfold in the European Parliament and the Council, BEUC, ETUC and EDRi seek to provide their insights on its potential implications for people.

We understand the EU's willingness to forge and strengthen partnerships with third countries to navigate rising geopolitical tensions and boost economic competitiveness. Yet, we want to stress the importance of designing such alternative partnerships with people's interests at their core. They should not come at the cost of the EU's ability to regulate, enforce its laws, or uphold fundamental protections in the long run.

Indeed, while we appreciate some of the positive elements of the agreement, we warn that its risks outweigh the tangible benefits for people. People in the EU expect all companies operating in the Single Market to comply fully with EU rules, regardless of their origin. Instead of reflecting the EU's golden standards in digital regulation, the deal introduces loopholes that could undermine fundamental rights, distort competition, and create legal uncertainty - ultimately eroding public trust in the digital economy.

As it stands, the DTA includes provisions, particularly on access to source code and data flows, that could weaken fundamental rights such as privacy and data protection. It could also limit the ability to scrutinise software-based systems, which is essential for algorithmic transparency. For example, if an AI system from Singapore is used in the EU for credit scoring, hiring, or insurance claims, authorities may struggle to verify whether it discriminates or unfairly denies services. This lack of oversight could hamper the enforcement of key digital laws like the AI Act, leaving people vulnerable to unfair practices and discriminatory outcomes. Additionally, data flow provisions may restrict the EU's ability to impose safeguards on data transfers outside its jurisdiction. These concerns are not just theoretical; they are echoed by the EDPS in its [recent opinion](#) on said agreement.

For these reasons, BEUC, EDRi, and ETUC do not consider this agreement a model for future digital trade agreements. Looking ahead to negotiations on similar agreements we urge the European Commission to take a more cautious approach: one that ensures robust protections for fundamental rights, including labour rights, easy regulatory oversight of AI systems and software-based solutions, full transparency and meaningful engagement with social partners and civil society.