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DIGITAL SINGLE MARKET OF THE EUROPEAN UNION: CREATION STRATEGY AND CURRENT RESULTS

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Dovgal O. A. Digital Single Market of the European Union: Creation Strategy and Current Results

The aim of the article is to analyze the strategy and current outcomes of the digital transformation process in Europe, which forms the basis for the creation of the Digital Single Market in order to enhance the growth potential of the European digital economy and the dynamic development of the EU IT services market. The methodological foundation of the study included scientific methods such as system analysis, generalization, and comparison. Additionally, historical, logical, and dynamic methods were employed, as well as statistical processing of empirical data, which allowed for the identification and analysis of the causes, main directions, conditions, and some results of digital transformations in the European Union economy. It is argued that the strategy for creating the Digital Single Market within the EU concerns the development of two key factors: first, increasing Europe's influence and power on the global stage, including through the stimulation of large enterprises; and second, making life easier for ordinary Europeans. It has been demonstrated that some EU initiatives in the digital sphere have already begun to significantly impact the domestic policies of the EU Member States while simultaneously strengthening the role of the EU globally, which becomes particularly relevant in light of the EU's ambition to become one of the leaders in the global IT services market. Currently, the IT services sector and its software segment are among the most dynamic industries in the EU. As a key industrial differentiator and a foundation for a growing range of innovations, software can greatly enhance the competitiveness of EU industry and substantially contribute to the growth of Europe's economy. It is reasonably concluded that digital transformations will help Europe achieve its desired goal – to become one of the leaders in the internet economy alongside the USA and Japan. Overall, the success of implementing the Digital Single Market strategy during a challenging period of challenges and crises will show how effective the EU's transformations are, how great Europe's potential is in countering the monopolization of the global digital market, how ready it is for radical changes in the internet sphere, and its capacity to control cyberspace.

Keywords: digitalization, global IT services market, Digital Single Market, European Union, development strategy.

Fig.: 3. **Bibl.:** 10.

Dovgal Olena A. – Doctor of Sciences (Economics), Professor, Professor of the Department of International Economic Relations and Logistics, V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University (4 Svobody Square, Kharkiv, 61022, Ukraine)

E-mail: e.dovgal@karazin.ua

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3219-9731>

Researcher ID: <https://www.webofscience.com/wos/author/record/845494>

Scopus Author ID: <https://www.scopus.com/authid/detail.uri?authorid=57217603375>

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Довгаль О. А. Єдиний цифровий ринок Європейського Союзу: стратегія створення та поточні результати

Мета статті полягає в аналізі стратегії та поточних результатів процесу цифрових перетворень у Європі, на яких базується створення Єдиного цифрового ринку задля сприяння максимальному зростанню потенціалу європейської цифрової економіки та динамічного розвитку ринку ІТ-послуг Європейського Союзу. Методологічною основою роботи слугували такі методи наукового пізнання, як системний аналіз, узагальнення та порівняння. Крім того, було застосовано історичний, логічний, динамічний методи, а також статистична обробка емпіричних даних, за допомогою яких виявлено та проаналізовано причини, основні напрямки, умови та деякі результати цифрових перетворень в економіці Європейського Союзу. Аргументовано, що стратегія створення Єдиного цифрового ринку в межах ЄС стосується розвитку двох ключових факторів: перший – це збільшення впливу та потуги Європи на світовому рівні, у тому числі за допомогою стимулювання великих підприємств; і друге – це полегшення життя для звичайних європейців. Доведено, що деякі ініціативи ЄС у цифровій сфері вже почали суттєво впливати на внутрішню політику країн – членів ЄС, одночасно зміцнюючи роль ЄС у глобальному масштабі, що стає особливо актуальним на тлі прагнення ЄС стати одним із лідерів світового ринку ІТ-послуг. Наразі сектор ІТ-послуг і його сегмент програмного забезпечення є однією з найдинамічніших галузей у ЄС. Будучи головним промисловим диференціатором та основою для зростаючого спектра інновацій, програмне забезпечення може значно підвищити конкурентоспроможність промисловості в ЄС та значною мірою сприяти зростанню економіки Європи. Обґрунтовано висновок, що цифрові перетворення допоможуть Європі досягти бажаної мети – стати одним із лідерів інтернет-економіки поряд із США та Японією. Загалом успіш реалізації стратегії Єдиного цифрового ринку в непростий період викликів і криз, покаже, наскільки ефективними є перетворення ЄС, наскільки великий потенціал Європи у протистоянні монополізації світового цифрового ринку, наскільки вона готова до кардинальних змін в інтернет-сфері і яка її здатність контролювати кіберпростір.

Ключові слова: цифровізація, світовий ринок ІТ-послуг, Єдиний цифровий ринок, Європейський Союз, стратегія розвитку.

Рис.: 3. **Бібл.:** 10.

Довгаль Олена Андріївна – доктор економічних наук, професор, професор кафедри міжнародних економічних відносин та логістики, Харківський національний університет імені В. Н. Каразіна (майдан Свободи, 4, Харків, 61022, Україна)

E-mail: e.dovgal@karazin.ua

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3219-9731>

Researcher ID: <https://www.webofscience.com/wos/author/record/845494>

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Since its creation as a European community in 1957, the European Union has worked to create a single market. The single market implies the creation of a single territory within the EU, eliminating any internal borders or other regulatory obstacles to the free movement of goods and services. The creation of such a market is one of the most significant achievements of European integration and, although not yet complete, has led to a significant increase in the GDP of the EU countries.

Since the early 2000s and in the wake of the internet revolution, the EU has been seeking to establish a specific set of rules for the single market in the digital environment. Growing awareness in the EU of the obstacles to the functioning of the Digital Single Market (DSM) has led to numerous EU initiatives to create a strategy for its creation. Gradually, these initiatives have expanded significantly and covered a wide range of activities, services and consumer rights. These provisions have a wide impact even beyond the EU, which speaks to the ability of the main trading players to set rules at the global level.

It is important to note that the creation of the European DSM will significantly affect the Member States from both a qualitative and normative point of view. It will affect not only political, economic, technological, ethical and jurisdictional issues, but also issues related to the creation of comprehensive free trade agreements. This goes deeper into the question of the EU's ability to become an appropriate global legislator for the digital world.

In the context of stimulating the economy of EU countries, as well as with the aim of improving the quality of educational and medical services and solving other social problems, the creation of a single information market without geographical barriers, simplification and standardization of laws on Internet trade throughout the EU, ensuring a favorable legal and tax environment for the expansion of electronic trade in goods, services, and technologies are becoming primary tasks.

In connection with the deepening of globalization processes, as well as the transformation of international digital markets for goods and services, the strategy for creating a Single Digital Market for Europe is of great economic interest to research scientists. The problems of developing a Single Digital Market for Europe are studied in the works of such scientists as J. Bughin, D. Dhingra, S. Lund, J. Manyika, K. Stamenov, J. Woetzel, and others [8; 9].

In their works, the authors examine the experience of digital transformations in Europe, the progress of the European strategy, the first results and further steps, and, in addition, the key principles of information technology development in the countries of the

European Union, analyze and compare the level of development of the digital economy of the USA, Japan and the EU countries.

Thus, Nyman-Metcalf K. and Papageorgiou I. consider the consequences of regulatory initiatives regarding the digital market from the point of view of states participating in the European Neighborhood Policy [10]. The basis for the study of the digital market of Europe in this work were official statistical data and reports published by the European Commission, Eurostat, analytical agencies IDC and McKinsey, the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy of Germany, etc.

The aim of the work is to analyze the strategy and current results of the digital transformation process in Europe, on which the creation of the Digital Single Market is based to facilitate the maximum growth of the potential of the European digital economy and the dynamic development of the IT services market of the European Union.

The following methods of scientific knowledge served as the methodological basis of the work: system analysis, generalization and comparison. In addition, historical, logical, dynamic methods were used, as well as statistical processing of empirical data, with the help of which the causes, main directions and conditions of digital transformations in the economy of the European Union were identified and analyzed.

Digitalisation has become a vital part of economic reality both in individual countries and in international relations.

The creation of the Digital Single Market strategy marked the EU's exit from the «era of naivety». For example, in Germany, during the Bundestag of 2009-2013, politicians in Berlin greatly underestimated the role of the Internet. And although a commission dealing with the political aspects of the digital revolution was established at the same time, neither politicians nor society took its opinion seriously. Registration on Twitter was enough to talk about the competence of German parliamentarians in the IT sphere.

In 2013, media publications talked about the Internet as a negative phenomenon, through which the US intelligence services carried out unauthorized wiretapping of the top officials of European states, as well as mass surveillance of foreign citizens by illegally accessing their personal data through search engines and social networks. Such statements could not help but exacerbate the problem of Germany's obvious lag in this area compared to leading countries and attract increased attention to it.

However, German business, which is certainly developing in line with modern trends on the way to

the digital future, has outpaced politicians: to become a powerful economic sector, the high-tech industry did not even need government programs. At the same time, it should be noted that to ensure stable growth of the industry, it is necessary not only to improve the legislative framework, but also to create a powerful communications infrastructure, which will be based on high-speed Internet. Moreover, a start-up business should have more opportunities to take out loans for development, and in general, companies should have reliable protection against cyber threats, which are extremely relevant in our time.

For two decades, there has been a continuous increase in trade turnover relative to GDP, and now there is a tendency for it to decline against the background of growing data flows between countries. This suggests that digitalization has today become the most important part of economic realities both in a single country and in international relations.

In March 2016, Harvard Business Review published an article by S. Lund, J. Manyika, J. Bughin, «Globalization Is Becoming More About Data and Less About Stuff» [8], which emphasized that the globalization of the 20th century was determined, above all, by rapidly growing volumes of trade in goods, since supply chains created by large transnational corporations (TNCs) very quickly covered the entire world. Accordingly, cross-border financial flows also increased significantly. Currently, the growth of world trade, as well as cross-border financial flows, has slowed down. But the growth of data flows has increased significantly.

Thus, according to research conducted by the McKinsey Global Institute [9], from 2006 to 2016, the volume of cross-border data flows increased more than 40 times, and by 2020 the flow will increase by another 9 times. All this suggests that the era of digital globalization, which is characterized by large data flows, has already arrived. As data flows become increasingly global, Europe and its member countries are faced with the challenge of looking for ways to expand their digital borders.

To ensure that Europe enters the digital age, the European Union has begun building a new Digital Single Market. It is based on the Digital Single Market Strategy, aimed at a radical restructuring of the digital industry in Europe. The strategy concerns the development of two key factors: the first is increasing Europe's influence and power at the global level, including through stimulation of large enterprises; and the second is making life easier for ordinary Europeans.

The first plans for the creation of the DSM were announced back in 2013, but real work began only in June 2015 [3].

The DSM is based on three main pillars: 1) improving access to digital goods and services for consumers and businesses across Europe; 2) Creating the necessary conditions and legal framework for digital networks and innovative services to flourish; 3) Maximising the growth potential of the digital economy.

These pillars are in turn divided into 16 areas, which the European Commission works on [2]:

1. Improving access to digital goods and services for consumers and businesses across Europe
 - 1.1. New rules for e-commerce. The European Commission (EC) aims to bring order to international e-commerce. It is expected that buyers should have a wider range of products in any category, while sellers will be able to increase their customer base.
 - 1.2. Consumer protection. Ensuring effective and consistent enforcement of consumer rights by revising the «Regulation on cooperation in the field of consumer protection».
 - 1.3. Fast and affordable delivery of goods. Two thirds of European companies say that high delivery costs are often the reason why a buyer abandons a purchase. The EU is in a complete mess in this area. However, it should be noted that the EC does not plan to set fixed tariffs.
 - 1.4. Ban on geo-linking. According to the EC, a situation where a user from a certain country is unable to access a specific website or is redirected to the website of a local store offering a higher price is unacceptable. The Commission believes that a product or service should cost the same for all consumers without exception, regardless of what country or continent they are from.
 - 1.5. Combating monopolies in e-commerce. The EC is conducting an antitrust investigation into competition issues affecting European e-commerce markets.
 - 1.6. Modern copyright law. The EC believes that copyright on digital content makes life too difficult for ordinary consumers. The Commission is working to ensure that any purchase made in one EU country is completely legal in another. In practice, this means that if a buyer buys a product at home, it should under no circumstances be considered piracy in another EU country.
 - 1.7. Broadband Internet access. Revision of the Satellite and Cable Directive to expand the reach of online broadcasters in Europe by implementing cross-border access to their services
 - 1.8. Simplifying VAT payments in the digital en-

vironment. Today, companies selling their products abroad face a number of problems that greatly complicate transactions, and sometimes make them simply unprofitable. For example, different rates of value added tax are such deterrents. The EC's strategy involves simplifying this system.

2. Creating favorable conditions and a legislative framework for the flourishing of digital networks and innovative services.

2.1. New rules for telecoms companies. The EC's ambitious plan is to create a truly single digital market (e.g. work on «defragmentation» of legislation), new initiatives in the field of spectrum allocation, investments in infrastructure upgrades, etc.

2.2. Updating the media. According to the EC's plans, the media must be brought into line with 21st century standards. The Audiovisual Media Services Directive must also be adapted to new content distribution business models.

2.3. Fair operation of online platforms. This area concerns issues such as the lack of transparency of search results in search engines, pricing policies of digital content sellers, relations between platforms and providers and the promotion of their own services to the detriment of competitors, etc. Including the issue of combating illegal content.

2.4. Personal data protection. The EC will review the Privacy Directive based on the new EU data protection rules in order to improve security in the provision of digital services.

2.5. Cybersecurity. This direction was created with the aim of working in the field of development of technologies and solutions for network security.

3. Maximizing the growth potential of the digital economy.

3.1. European initiative on free flow of data. Big data, clouds and the Internet of Things. These are probably the three most important trends in the digital industry in recent years. Unfortunately, huge amounts of data, such as climate sensor data, satellite images and many others, are not used in any way. In its strategy, the EC proposes to make this data available to everyone. As for cloud technologies, the EC plans to provide them with all possible support.

3.2. Development of common standards. Within the framework of this area, the EC will develop standards and rules of interaction in the areas of: e-health, transport planning,

energy, as they are of key importance for the single digital market.

3.3. Digital society. The EC will support an inclusive digital society in which citizens will develop Internet skills to increase their chances of getting a job. This area also includes a new action plan in the field of e-government, which will unite government online services across Europe and ensure the interaction of various national systems. For several years now, the European Union has been implementing an ambitious and comprehensive strategy for the digital single market, and some results can already be drawn.

By 2017, the European Commission had already put forward 38 policy initiatives, 23 of which were legislative proposals. Some of the key DSM initiatives have already been adopted by the European Parliament and the Council [5]. These include:

- ✦ content portability, which allows Europeans to travel with the films, music or e-books they have purchased or subscribed to;
- ✦ the abolition of mobile roaming charges throughout the EU;
- ✦ the spectrum coordination decision, which frees up the 700 MHz band for 5G mobile networks and new online services;
- ✦ implementation of the Marrakesh Treaty, which facilitates access to published works for blind persons and for all persons with print disabilities;
- ✦ the WiFi4EU initiative, which aims to create free public Wi-Fi hotspots across the EU.

Some EU initiatives in the digital sphere have already begun to influence the domestic policies of EU member states, while strengthening the EU's role on a global scale, which is becoming especially relevant against the backdrop of the EU's aspiration to become one of the leaders in the global IT services market.

Today, the United States remains the leader in the global IT services market. Its revenue for 2024 amounted to USD 512.8 billion, an increase of 3.8% compared to the previous year (Fig. 1).

The EU IT services market is the second largest in the world. Its volume in 2024 reached USD 291.5 billion, showing a year-on-year growth of 3.2%, which is almost twice as high as the growth of real GDP in the region. The European market is growing largely due to services related to the development and support of applications.

Although historically the European IT market has always remained second after the United States, the creation of the Digital Single Market Strategy

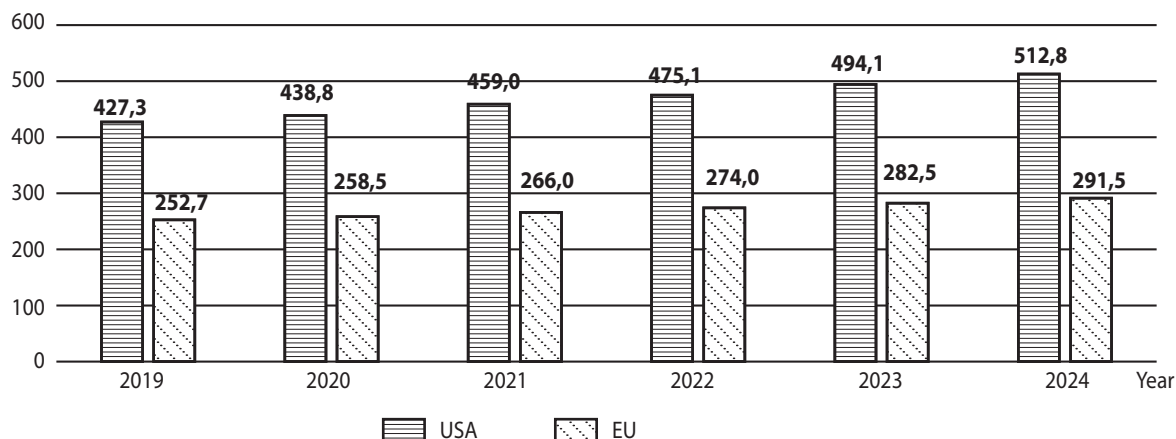


Fig. 1. IT services market sizes in the US and EU countries, billion US dollars

Source: compiled by [7].

marks Europe's desire not only to compete in the market, but also to fight for leadership in the field of information and communications.

The development of digitalization in Europe can be visualized using Fig. 2, which shows the dynamics of the DESI [Digital Economy and Society Index].

DESI is a composite index that sums up around 30 relevant digital indicators for Europe and tracks the evolution of EU Member States in the following key areas:

- ✦ *Connectivity*. This area measures the uptake of broadband infrastructure as well as its quality.

- ✦ *Human capital*. This area measures the level of skills of the population that are necessary to take advantage of the digital society.
- ✦ *Internet use*. This area measures how actively people use online services on the Internet.
- ✦ *Digital integration*. This area measures the digitalisation of business and the use of online sales channels.
- ✦ *Digital public services*. This area measures the level of use of digital services in the public sector. The e-Government area is a particular focus.

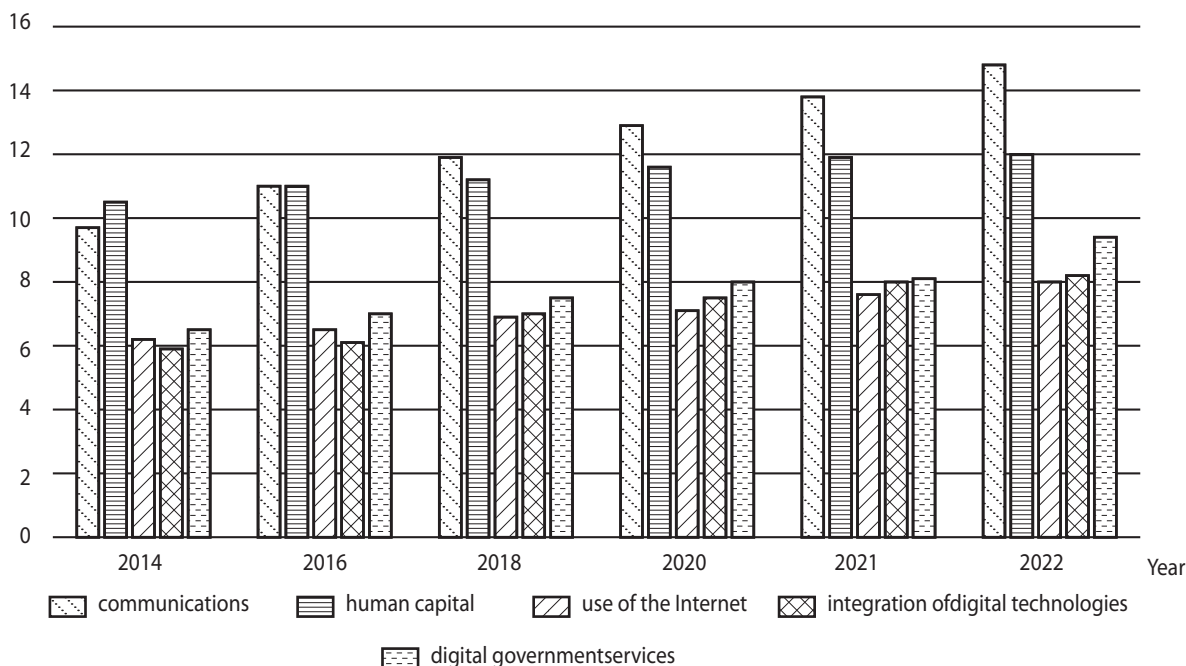


Fig. 2. The dynamics of the DESI index for the EU-28

Source: compiled by [1].

Fig. 3 shows the DESI index values for the EU countries for 2022.

A holistic approach to digital technologies, according to European leaders, is necessary to confront modern challenges and seize the opportunities offered by the 4th industrial revolution.

The importance of an ambitious plan for the digitalisation of Europe, its society and economy, was underlined by the European Council at the Digital Summit held in Tallinn in September 2017.

It was noted that the implementation of the strategy will require efforts in many areas: markets, infrastructure, Internet connectivity, social and cultural aspects, norms and standards, content

and data, investment, cybersecurity, e-government, R&D, etc.

Also, one of the results of the Tallinn summit was the signing of three decrees on guarantees of fair and honest competition between digital companies. For several months, France, Germany, Italy and Spain have been seeking to change tax legislation so that it is not adapted to tech giants, their business models and aggressive tax planning practices, which lead to a slowdown in the growth of European businesses (and not least start-ups), which could not but affect the public finances of EU member states. A company that generates income in Europe must pay

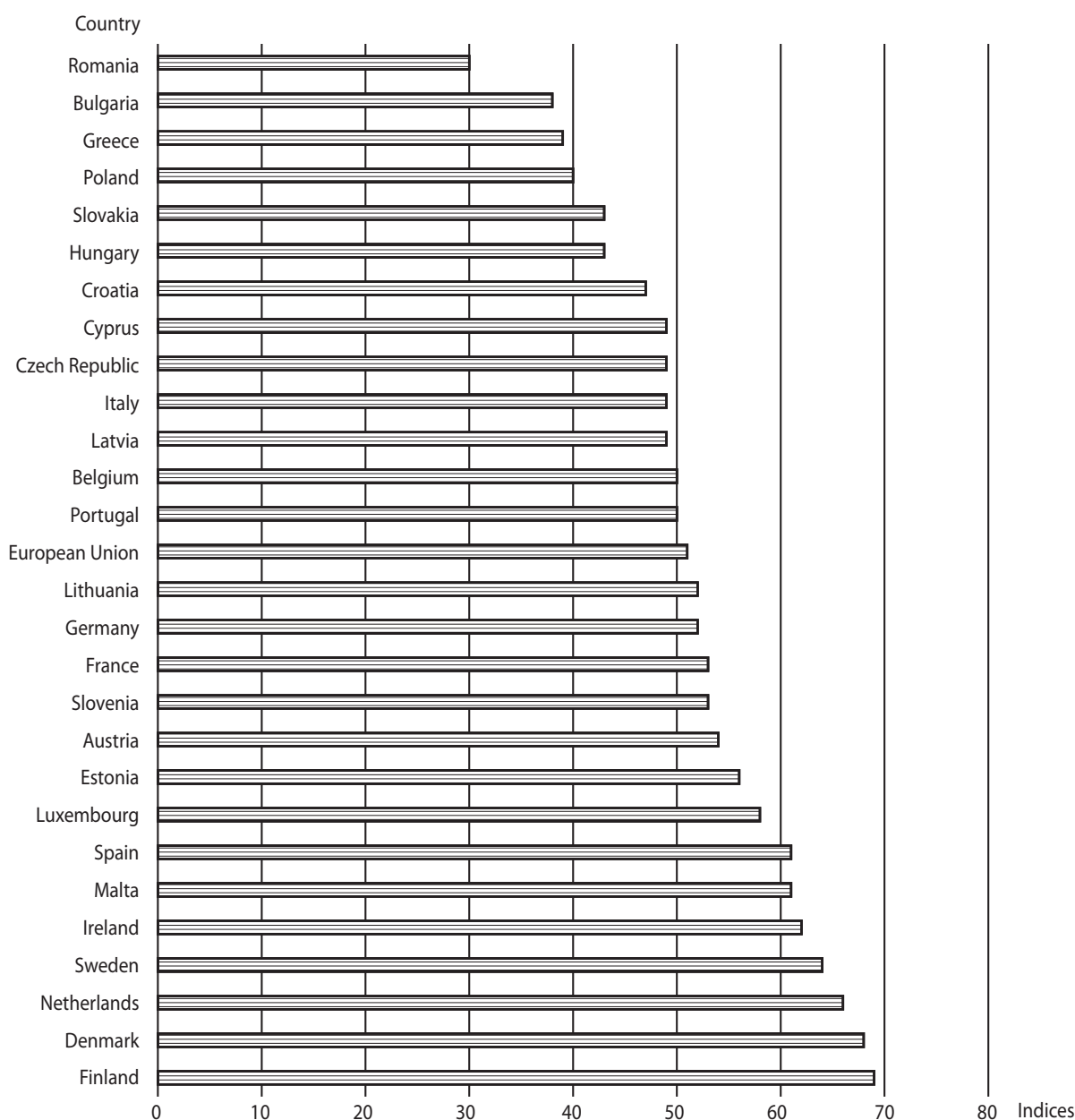


Fig. 3. EU DESI Composite Indices for 2022

Source: compiled by [1].

taxes in the country where this turnover occurs. This is a question of cost efficiency, financial fairness and sovereignty.

The European digital economy also requires greater transparency and greater loyalty from digital platforms: search engines, social networking sites and price comparison sites.

It should be noted that in today's extremely difficult economic conditions, the problems of the digital sector inevitably affect the competitiveness of the country's economy, since a lag or delay in obtaining and processing relevant data, the inability to competently use a digital resource ultimately lead to the loss of previous market positions.

From the standpoint of the theory of asymmetry of international trade, the digital dependence of one country on another leads to an increase in the lag in economic development between these countries. A feature of such structural dependence is the impossibility of overcoming it, since progress in the field of digital technologies occurs at a fairly high speed, and new technologies can only be reproduced on the basis of previous results.

The IT services sector and its software segment is one of the most dynamic industries in the EU. As a key industrial differentiator and the basis for a growing range of innovations, software can significantly increase the competitiveness of industry in the EU and significantly contribute to the growth of the European economy.

German and European companies can take the lead. They have a rich engineering pool, knowledge and sufficient experience to make a qualitative leap in the economy. And to do this, they can use a huge talent pool: in Europe, there are more than 4.7 million programmers and software developers, while in the USA there are only 4.1 million. And in the five leading European technology hubs of London, Paris, Berlin, Madrid and Amsterdam, there are about 664 thousand software experts - more than in the entire Silicon Valley region (565 thousand) [6].

The basis of the IT services market in Europe is the software (SW) and software services sector. Software segments such as infrastructure software and platforms, as well as application software products, will grow only slightly until 2027.

One of the main reasons is the maturity of these segments in various European countries. Growth in these areas is driven by investments from mid-sized businesses, which in many cases do not have the same level of maturity as large enterprises. In addition, software markets are increasingly under pressure as more and more companies move to cloud solutions [4].

The technical implementation services of a software solution are almost unnecessary when companies start using a cloud service. This is one of the significant reasons for the decline of the infrastructure-related IT services market. Application-related IT services are the largest segment of the market. This segment will remain extremely important, as these services are needed for changes, improvements, upgrades, maintenance and management of existing solutions.

As for the gaming market segment, it is thriving as a result of a number of innovations: powerful smartphones allow for the launch of a huge variety of mobile games, improved broadband and infrastructure capabilities allow for the growth of users in online games, and innovative revenue generation and digital distribution models have significantly expanded the addressable market.

As for the gaming market segment, it is thriving as a result of a number of innovations: powerful smartphones allow for a huge variety of mobile games to be played, improved broadband and infrastructure capabilities allow for increased user bases in online gaming, and innovative revenue generation and digital distribution models have significantly expanded the addressable market.

Numerous technological trends can have a significant impact on the development of the IT services market in the coming years. Depending on their advantages, cost, level and pace of their implementation in niche or mass markets, they can more or less help accelerate the growth of the IT services market.

Of course, support for European IT service providers from the government, an improved legislative framework, the development of high-speed Internet access and other measures planned within the framework of the Digital Single Market Strategy cannot but give impetus to the entry of European companies into the global highly competitive IT services market.

CONCLUSIONS

Thus, the Digital Single Market Strategy is of undoubted interest to both research scientists, entrepreneurs and ordinary people, since the future of all sectors of the EU economy depends on how successfully it is implemented.

The Digital Single Market Strategy, aimed at removing regulatory barriers that hinder the expansion of trade in IT goods and services, which limit and hinder the development of all sectors of the EU economy, if properly implemented, will serve as an impetus for the expansion of product markets, will allow for the provision of better quality services, will facilitate the implementation of new projects and the increase in

the number of jobs. The DSM will connect sellers and buyers by ensuring the free circulation of goods, services, people and capital on the Internet.

In addition, the Digital Single Market will ensure cross-border access to digital content. The DSM will also harmonize EU legislation and consumer protection rules, which means that competition will be fair. Importantly, when making a transaction, the data of the buyer and seller will be protected, regardless of which European country they are located in. And the standardization and simplification of laws on online trade throughout the EU will allow sellers to reduce delivery costs and reduce VAT. The DSM will put an end to geographical barriers, and residents of any country will be able to subscribe to the necessary sites throughout Europe without any problems.

It should be noted that the DSM also assumes the optimization of technical capabilities, the abolition of roaming charges, which means that even more people will be able to use the Internet. All these changes will help Europe achieve its desired goal - to become one of the leaders of the Internet economy along with the United States and Japan.

Overall, the success of the Digital Single Market Strategy implementation in a difficult period of challenges and crises will show how effective the reforms carried out by the EU are, how great is Europe's potential in resisting the monopolization of the global digital market, how ready it is for radical changes in the Internet sphere and what is its ability to control cyberspace. ■

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