From: ▇▇▇▇▇▇
To: DigitalConnectivity
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Attachments: R2C submission on Consultation on the Digital Connectivity Strategy.docx

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See attached the R2C submission on the Digital Connectivity Strategy for Ireland.

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R2C submission on Consultation on the Digital Connectivity Strategy

Wednesday 30 March 2022

By making this submission, R2C would like to emphasise the important role the public sector needs to play in the implementation of the Government's Digital **Connectivity Strategy** and overall **Digital Ireland Framework** for Ireland.

First of all, the state needs to own the broadband network. What is paid by the state needs to be owned by the state. All infrastructures need to be publicly owned. The **National Broadband Plan** needs to build the network of fibre optic as soon as possible.

It is important the strategy and the framework clearly show how it will contribute to and strengthen social and environmental justice. The argument to tackle social and environmental justice intrinsically applies to digitalisation. Digitalisation need to serve the common good not the private greed.

Digital connectivity is not a magic wand and research shows that it can have the opposite effect and deepen the social divide in society and intensify demand on natural resources.

Digitalisation should not remove interaction with human beings: vital services users need to keep access to physical offices and human beings for information. People should have the choice on how to access information and not being imposed digital solutions only. It will at the same time protect the workforce. Public services need to keep open doors with staff ready to greed and talk to service users. Regulations need to have all companies to clearly provide a phone number or a physical address in a standardised way for customers to have the right to talk to a human being. Digitalisation should be a tool to complement information provision to users. Digitalisation should not be a one fits all solution to information provision.

Everyone should have the right to a bank account and everyone should have the right to pay cash in shops. This will provide protection for the most vulnerable and marginalised members of society. The strategy needs to clearly show it will tackle deplatforming.

Strong worker's rights will protect the workforce against plateformisation. The state needs to protect workers to avoid creating a workforce of informal workers living in job precarity and insecurity. In relation to remote working hubs again we need to make sure robust legislations are in place to protect workers in working hubs.

The argument that digitalisation will support a green transition needs to be taken with caution. The greater the capacity for the network to gather data, the greater is the effect on our natural resources and electricity (for example data centres.). Giving priority by legislating on personal data protection will have a positive effect to protect our environment. Surveillance capitalism is a threat to the environment and to personal data. The strategy and framework need to be very clear on how it will prevent data being used as a commodity and how it will prevent mass surveillance on the internet.

In terms of security, we cannot emphasize enough the urgency to invest into robust cybersecurity and to introduce a national plan to educate citizen on cybersecurity.

Open science, open source, open data models need to be used to manage and secure smart cities for the common good. Its model needs to be decentralised to prevent mass surveillance. We also need to investigate how high-speed connectivity/digitalisation actually reinvigorates towns and villages, how and how much it contributes to the local economy to make sure it does not impose e-commerce activity that would have the opposite effect.