



**UDENRIGSMINISTERIET**  
*Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
of Denmark*

# **STRATEGY FOR DENMARK'S TECH DIPLOMACY 2021-2023**

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*FEBRUARY 2021*



# DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENTS IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT OF TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

**Preface by Minister for Foreign Affairs  
Jeppe Kofod**

Technology has never been more pervasive in the lives of people around the globe. Living in one of the most digitised countries in the world, millions of Danes see and use modern technologies every day from the moment they wake up to the moment they go to sleep. In the wake of an unprecedented and disastrous pandemic, COVID-19 has reminded us of the great extent to which we depend on technology in our personal lives and as we face shared global challenges.

New technologies change how people interact and societies function, and they reshape how we engage with the world. This has caused new avenues for foreign policy to open up and issues of technology now take centre stage in international relations. Artificial intelligence, quantum computing and 5G become more than simply hardware and software; they are increasingly indicators and arenas of great power politics while cyber-attacks and disinformation campaigns test our digital resolve.

For Denmark, it is critical that technological development supports and upholds democratic values, human rights and the integrity of our societal model. Technology should contribute to better, freer

and more meaningful lives and assist humanity in solving the shared global challenges of the 21st century, especially the climate crisis. Based on this conviction, we want to engage and work with like-minded countries, companies and organisations for a more inclusive, sustainable and human-centred technological development. We will make our voice heard in the EU as Europe takes on a greater responsibility in defining our technological future, and we will work within NATO to ensure the rightful place of technology as a key consideration for the safety and security of citizens in Denmark, the Euro-Atlantic community and across the world.

The balance of power in tech has tipped. Today, a small number of people in a small number of private companies hold immense sway over the direction of an increasingly global society. Democratic governments, parliaments, and the people they legitimately represent have conversely lost some of their ability to steer our democratic societies. We want powerful companies to promote responsible technology development and use in a way that is proportionate with their size and influence and we want to enable citizens, parliaments and democracies

to have a stronger say in shaping our technological future. We will do this while we continue to nourish and encourage innovation and entrepreneurship and harness the immense opportunities new technologies present. We must marshal the full force of innovation on issues such as affordable universal healthcare, safety for all and combating climate change if we want a better future for all of humanity.

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***The strategy for Denmark's tech diplomacy will focus our efforts towards a more just, democratic and safe technological future.***

This is a central challenge for technology in the years and decades ahead. A challenge that Denmark intends to meet. In close collaboration with businesses, civil society, educational institutions and like-minded countries. We will bring the experiences and lessons of Denmark with us while listening and learning from the frontiers of technological development.



The strategy for Denmark's tech diplomacy will focus our efforts towards a more just, democratic and safe technological future. It lists areas of strategic priority where we believe much is at stake, and sets out concrete outcomes and outputs that Denmark wants to bring to life. Some might argue that it is an ambitious agenda, facing significant headwinds. But we welcome the challenge to help lead the way.

# TECH DIPLOMACY IN THE DIGITAL AGE

As one of the world's most digitised countries, Denmark has a strong foundation for engaging with international technological development. Our high degree of societal trust and significant technological

capabilities means that we are quick to adopt and implement new digital solutions in both public and private sectors. Denmark is home to many cutting

edge companies demonstrating important examples of responsible application of technology, which help promote democratic values, develop new solutions to complex problems, and contribute to the country's growth and employment.

When Denmark appointed the world's first tech ambassador four years ago, optimism about the use of technology was widespread. Since then, data leaks, cyber-attacks, influence campaigns, online terror content, pressure for fairer taxation

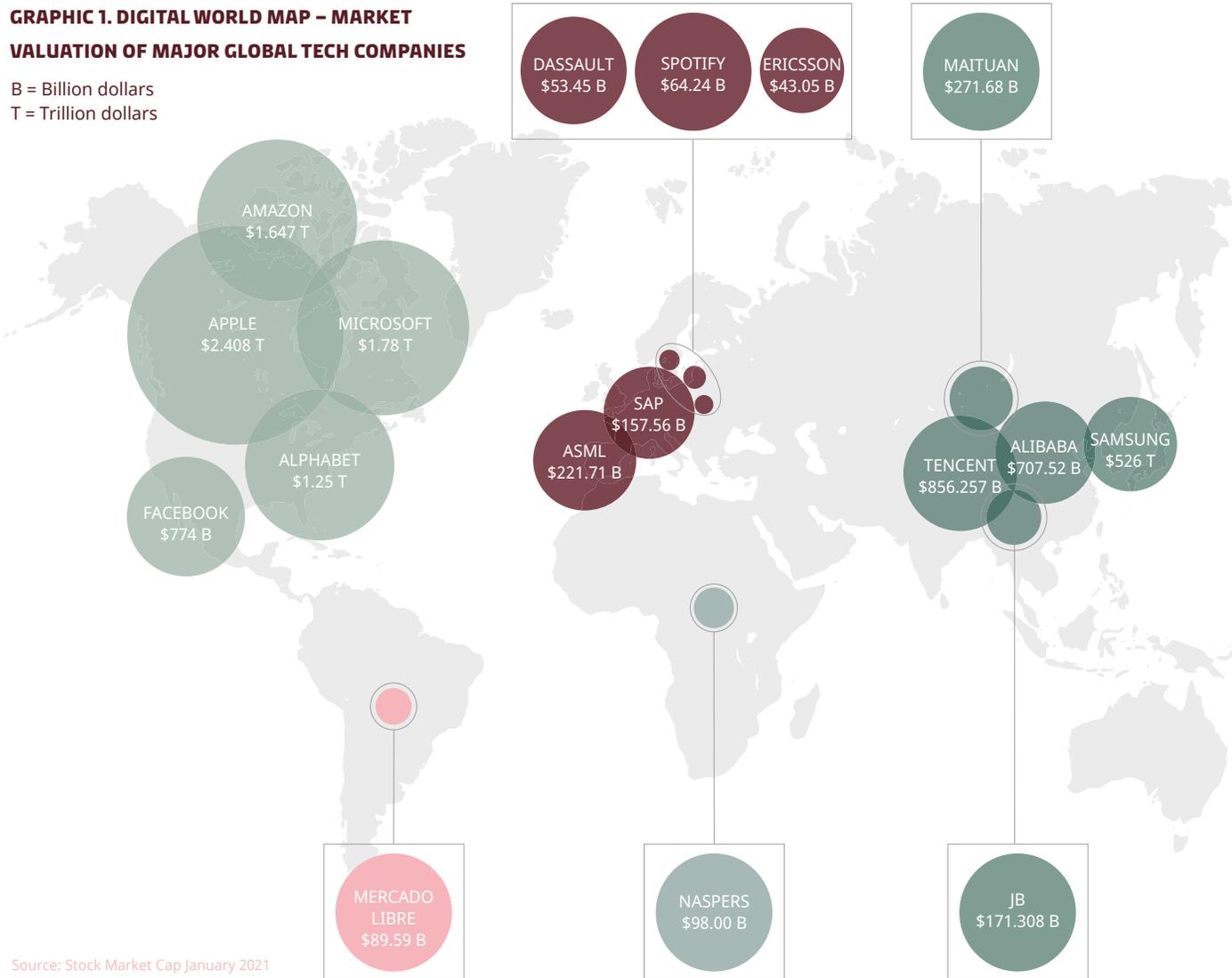
of tech companies, and concerns about critical digital infrastructure have caused the pendulum to swing in the opposite direction.

**There is a more critical view of the tech giants. There is no question that the tech sector must be regulated – the question is how to regulate it.**

Today, the global tech debate is more nuanced. There is a more critical view of the tech giants. There is no question that the tech sector must be regulated – the question is how to regulate it. This does not change the fact that technology has brought tremendous societal benefits in a wide range of fields such as healthcare, climate, education and welfare. But it necessitates a more balanced approach to the full spectrum of potential of technology, from beneficial to detrimental. This also requires that democratic countries muster the courage to take charge and shape the framework for a responsible technological future, rather than leaving this task solely to a small cadre of companies.

**GRAPHIC 1. DIGITAL WORLD MAP – MARKET VALUATION OF MAJOR GLOBAL TECH COMPANIES**

B = Billion dollars  
T = Trillion dollars



Source: Stock Market Cap January 2021



Technology is a central component of the strategic competition between the United States and China. Investments in research and development of new technologies are a key competitive parameter that is shifting the geopolitical balance of power. Meanwhile, cyber-attacks against public authorities, companies and citizens are an ever present threat. Many countries are using digital tools to advance foreign policy objectives in the grey area between war and peace. Methods include cyber-attacks on critical infrastructure and influence campaigns conducted through social media to undermine democracies and our alliances. New technologies also provide authoritarian regimes with new opportunities for

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***Technology is a central component of the strategic competition between the United States and China.***

digital surveillance, behaviour control, oppression and censorship. Furthermore, non-state actors are utilising digitalisation to cause harm. Advanced hacking tools are readily available to cyber-criminals, and terrorists have gained new means of radicalising, recruiting and planning attacks on the internet.

Digital platforms connect us more than ever before and have provided an unprecedented number of people globally with the opportunity to express their views. This enriches the public debate and brings new perspectives to light. But complex and concealed algorithms also challenge the democratic conversation and at worst foster exclusionary and socially destructive echo chambers. Digital platforms hold tremendous potential to create inclusive communities and strengthen democracy, but much of the content seen through the prism of social media is filtered and targeted according to micro-segmentation of our digital behaviour and preferences. With different and individually adapted versions of reality presented to every user, debate easily becomes polarised and the risk of misinformation spreading increases. Despite ground-breaking initiatives such as the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), privacy protections remain limited in a world where it has never been easier to harvest unimaginable amounts of data about our lives and movements.

New technology is high on the agenda of today's most important international forums. Making Europe fit for the digital age is one of the top priorities of the EU. NATO and the EU are focused on maintaining a military technological edge, strengthening digital resilience and protecting critical infrastructure. Meanwhile, the UN is exploring how rule-based international cooperation can be adapted to keep up with rapid technological developments.

All around the world, technology and access to the internet are helping to lift millions of people out of poverty by giving them access to knowledge, education and employment. Technology is also giving more people the opportunity to start their own businesses and participate in democratic movements

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***Access to technology and digital platforms alone is not enough to ensure that the technological future belongs to all citizens, everywhere.***

and political discussions. Unfortunately, not everyone has the opportunity to participate. Almost half of the world's population lacks access to the internet, and many girls and women in developing countries do not receive their fair share of the benefits that technological development has to offer. But access to technology and digital platforms alone is not enough to ensure that the technological future belongs to all citizens, everywhere. It requires that human rights are also respected online. The rise of the internet must be accompanied by a commitment to protect marginalised groups, children and young people online, as well as to upholding the rights to freedom of expression and assembly.

**GRAPHIC 2. SURVEY OF THE DANISH POPULATION'S OPINIONS ABOUT NEW TECHNOLOGY**

STATEMENT	DISAGREE	AGREE
New technology can solve our greatest societal challenges (e.g. climate crisis, affordable social welfare, health care, terrorism, poverty)	14%	43%
Kids and youth are generally safe on the internet and social media	48%	21%
Tech companies are living up to their societal responsibility (e.g. in terms of tax payments and responsible handling of data)	43%	12%

In connection to the strategy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark has commissioned a survey among the Danish population regarding citizens' opinions towards new technology. The survey was conducted with 1,013 representative Danes in the fall of 2020.



In the 21st century, new players have stepped onto the global stage. In just a few years, tech companies such as Google, Facebook, Amazon, Tencent, Baidu and Alibaba have amassed a size and influence that surpasses that of many countries. They have unprecedented influence on the development of society and the daily lives of ordinary people – and they often play the role of de facto foreign policy actors. Meanwhile, private tech companies are operating large parts of our critical digital infrastructure and leading an increasing share of the research into new technologies. Data-driven business models and the tech giants' data monopolies, which are increasingly dominating both digital and traditional industries, are challenging markets and legislation.

These unequal market conditions become a barrier for the many responsible, but smaller, technology companies when the enormous value creation of the data economy is concentrated in the hands of a few. At the same time, it threatens the financing of our welfare society when large global tech companies pay meagre or no taxes. It is critical for our society, democracy and economy that the world's largest and richest tech companies – like all other companies – pay their fair share of taxes and operate responsibly. Although the tech giants have made strides in many respects, they still fail to meet their societal responsibility to a degree commensurate with their influence.

## RESPONSIBLE, DEMOCRATIC AND SECURE TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

Denmark must navigate this new digital age. This requires action, commitment to global cooperation and the courage to lead if we are to maintain our democratic values while realising the potential of new technology and managing its risks. Denmark must take the lead and actively help shape global technology governance to ensure that technological development supports our security, values and prosperity.

New technology and its societal implications transcend borders. To that end, Denmark's tech diplomacy will contribute to domestic discussions with perspectives and knowledge on global trends from the frontier of technology development. We will represent Danish interest and raise specific cases directly with the tech industry on behalf of Danish authorities, in recognition that far-reaching decisions made at the headquarters of these companies greatly impact Danish businesses and the lives of the Danish people. And we will use our international network to promote Denmark as a digital

pioneer and strengthen technological cooperation with other countries.

The vision for Denmark's tech diplomacy is thus as follows:

***A responsible, democratic and secure technological future that delivers solutions to the world's greatest challenges***

To support this vision, Denmark's tech diplomacy in 2021-2023 will focus on three strategic priorities and subsidiary aims.

The following pages outline the strategy's priorities, impact areas, outcomes and key performance indicators. Some results can be delivered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark alone, while the majority will require close cooperation with relevant authorities, business organisations, companies, labour and employer organisations, partners and civil society at home and abroad. Specific road maps and project plans will be developed for each focus area.

## RESPONSIBILITY



The tech industry meets its societal responsibility and operates on a level playing field

## DEMOCRACY



Global digital governance builds on democratic values and human rights

## SECURITY



Technology supports the safety and security of Denmark

# RESPONSIBILITY



**We will work to ensure that the tech giants meet their societal responsibility and operate on a level playing field.**

The tech giants should uphold their part of the social contract. Denmark will help drive forward the global discussion on challenges related to tech companies' data-driven and algorithmic business models and push for international solutions including on the issue of taxation of the digital economy – an issue where Denmark is actively engaged in ongoing negotiations internationally. Working in cooperation with like-minded countries, we will promote responsible business conduct and contribute to clearly defined courses of action when the tech giants fail to deliver on societal expectations and adhere to regulations. We will help lead the way by elevating

Danish and international examples of responsible development and application of new technology, seeking to make Denmark an international digital pioneer. We will not do this alone, but in dialogue and committed collaboration with the tech industry and in close coordination with relevant Danish authorities. By highlighting responsible Danish tech companies and digital solutions for the public sector with a high degree of trust, we will contribute to creating better opportunities for responsible Danish technology across the world and promote Denmark as an attractive destination for tech investments with a clean, green and sustainable foundation.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY	IMPACT AREAS	OUTCOMES	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
Responsibility	<b>Fair business models and market conditions</b>	Denmark has a strong voice in the international debate on data-driven business models, platform algorithms and antitrust in the digital sphere.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contributed to Danish policy development on the tech industry's business models.</li> <li>Contributed to international policy development and mechanisms of action for cases where major tech companies fail to meet societal expectations.</li> <li>Achieved concrete changes in conduct with major tech companies in a minimum of five specific cases raised on behalf of relevant Danish authorities.</li> </ol>
	<b>Danish digital solutions</b>	Technological development supports Denmark's social welfare model, growth and employment.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Through leveraging the tech embassy's network, contributed to 10 specific export opportunities for Danish companies and foreign investments in Denmark for responsible technology.</li> <li>Established dialogue with labour and employer organisations in Denmark and relevant authorities on the challenges and opportunities presented by the digital age to the Danish social welfare model.</li> <li>Contributed to Denmark's digital policy development with at least 10 reports/analyses annually on significant tech policy issues.</li> </ol>
		Denmark is internationally recognised as a frontrunner for responsible technology development – in both the public and private sectors.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Published and promoted a catalogue with Danish examples of responsible technological development in the private and public sectors.</li> <li>Elevated Denmark's approach to responsible technological development globally through international press and media efforts.</li> </ol>

# DEMOCRACY



**We will champion global digital rules and regulations that build on democratic values and human rights.**

The EU has taken the lead on responsible digitisation and regulation of the tech industry, but to elevate these efforts globally the EU must have a much stronger voice outside the Union's borders. Denmark should strive to shape global technology governance together with the EU, not simply comply with it. To that end we will work towards a clearly defined foreign and security policy on technology for the EU that is firmly supported by Member States. We will contribute to closer transatlantic cooperation on development and application of new technologies. We will insist on strengthening multilateral cooperation on technology, contribute to the UN Secretary-General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation and collaborate closely with the UN Tech Envoy. We intend to help

lead the way as democracies seek to find common ground and set the direction for global digital rules and regulations. Denmark will ensure that the protection of human rights online remains a key priority and will contribute to building new alliances, including with the tech industry, in the struggle to maintain an open, global and free internet. We are determined to ensure that new technology supports democratic institutions, contributes to open public debate, and allows for the free exchange and expression of opinions. We will work to ensure that citizens have the necessary opportunities and resources to lead a healthy digital life and that social media platforms foster understanding and discourage division.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY	IMPACT AREAS	OUTCOMES	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
Democracy	European digital leadership based on democratic values	The EU has a strong voice in international cooperation on global digital rules and regulations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Delivered concrete policy proposals for the development of a well-defined and active tech foreign policy for the EU.</li> <li>10. Created stronger transatlantic dialogue on new technology and global digital rules and regulations through the annual Tech &amp; Cyber Retreat.</li> </ul>
		European tech companies have a clear voice in the international technology debate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. Established a dialogue with 10 relevant and responsible European tech companies with the aim of developing a European tech alliance.</li> </ul>
	Human rights online	Denmark defends the open, global and free internet and works to ensure that human rights are respected and promoted online and in the development of new technologies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12. Established a strategic partnership with NGOs, like-minded countries and tech companies to monitor digitally driven acts of violence, including potential genocide.</li> <li>13. Contributed specific policy proposals to the Freedom Online Coalition on the role of the tech industry in protecting human rights online.</li> <li>14. Strengthened civil society's digital resilience in developing countries.</li> <li>15. Contributed to putting responsible technology on the agenda of the UN Human Rights Council.</li> </ul>

# SECURITY



## We want technology to support Denmark's safety and security.

We will contribute to the EU and NATO gaining a better understanding of the security implications of new technology, combined with the ability to address and manage these implications. We want NATO and the EU to remain at the forefront of technological development and will help cultivate a structured collaboration with the tech companies, which develop technologies utilised for both civilian and military purposes that have become vital for our critical infrastructure. We will strengthen cooperation with like-minded countries and the tech industry

to better mitigate cyber threats against Denmark. We want a clearer division of responsibilities between states and companies and better information basis for potential sanctions against those responsible for cybercrimes and cyber-attacks. We will require social media companies to take greater responsibility for preventing abuse of their platforms for state-sponsored influence campaigns, and will seek a closer cooperation between companies and Danish authorities to protect children and youth online.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY	IMPACT AREAS	OUTCOMES	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
Security	Security policy cooperation	NATO and the EU have strengthened the ability to manage the security implications of technological developments.	16. Built a structured collaboration with the tech industry for NATO and the EU. 17. Successfully hosted high-level visit for NATO and allies in Silicon Valley with the purpose of establishing closer industrial collaboration that will contribute to maintaining the Alliance's technological lead.
		Better mitigation of cyber-threats through strengthened cooperation and clearer division of responsibilities between states and tech companies.	18. Brought together at least 20 like-minded countries at a high level for security policy discussions with the tech industry.
	Cyber and disinformation	Social media companies take greater responsibility for preventing the misuse of their platforms for state-sponsored influence campaigns.	19. Contributed to international cooperation with social media companies on countering malign influence campaigns.
		Major social media companies take greater responsibility for ensuring that Danish children and youth are not exposed to harmful and illegal content.	20. Contributed to dialogue between relevant Danish authorities and the five social media platforms used most by children and youth in Denmark.
Children and youth online	Denmark is seen as a pacesetter in the protection of children and youth online.	21. Contributed to international cooperation on the protection of children and youth online, based on Danish experiences.	

# GLOBAL TECH DIPLOMACY WITH STRONG ROOTS IN DENMARK

The Tech Ambassador has a global mandate and is supported by a team based in Silicon Valley, Copenhagen and Beijing. The presence in Silicon Valley is particularly important for the purposes of representing Denmark and building bridges to the tech industry. The organisational setup will be assessed regularly to ensure optimum implementation of the strategy and effective utilisation of resources.

Denmark's tech diplomacy is conducted globally through six defined roles:

- **Representative** of the Danish Government and central administration in relation to the global tech industry, with a focus on accountable and critical dialogue.
- **Adviser** who collects and brings home knowledge about technological developments, supports innovation and ensures technology issues remain high on the foreign and security policy agenda.
- **Convener** and Coalition Builder with global stakeholders, including other countries, companies, business organisations, multilateral organisations and civil society.

- **Contributor** of expertise and insight to the Danish public debate on technological development and the influence of the tech industry.
- **Policy developer**, who, through collection of knowledge and international perspectives on technological development, contributes to Danish solutions to global challenges.
- **Global champion**, who brings attention to Denmark as a digital pioneer and contributes to Danish tech exports and foreign investment in Denmark.

The strategy is implemented in close collaboration with the many other Danish efforts internationally in the digital and technological field, including export and investment promotion and the Danish Innovation Centres. In order to create value for all of Denmark, the tech diplomacy must be firmly rooted with Danish authorities, companies, business organisations, NGOs and citizens. Therefore, the following new organisational initiatives will help ensure Danish efforts on tech policy at home and abroad are innovative, coordinated and anchored in Danish society.

In addition, a working group of relevant Danish authorities will be established to ensure that the international effort remains rooted in national priorities. The monitor group will meet once a year and will be kept informed of the results of Denmark's tech diplomacy.

## TECH ADVISORY BOARD

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark will establish a new Tech Advisory Board that will advise and inspire Denmark's tech diplomacy. The Board will consist of five to eight Danish and international experts from relevant companies, research institutions, think tanks and NGOs. The Board will meet once annually and contribute to the ongoing public debate on Denmark's tech diplomacy.

## TECH NETWORK FOR DANISH EMBASSIES

International technology policy is not only driven by forces based in Silicon Valley. Many other countries, cities and organisations are also important arenas for global technological development and international cooperation on digital rules and regulations. Therefore, a tech network for relevant Danish embassies and multilateral missions will be established to strengthen Denmark's global advocacy in the field of technology.

## CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

Denmark's tech diplomacy must be embedded in the Danish population. Therefore:

- 1) an annual poll will be conducted to understand how Danes view technology development. The poll will serve as both a sounding board for our diplomatic efforts as well as the basis for broad public debate on the challenges and opportunities of new technologies;
- 2) public events will be organised in collaboration with a broad range of partners focusing on the possibilities and challenges of technology and;
- 3) efforts will be made to engage in collaboration and dialogue with a wide range of civil society organisations to ensure the involvement of different social groups and perspectives, including an annual roundtable meeting with civil society on the strategy and results.

Read more online

<https://techamb.um.dk/>

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