

The Critical Omission of Software Technology in the EIC Work Programme 2025

Prepared by Informatics Europe and co-signed¹ by National Informatics Associations of Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland and United Kingdom.

As the European Innovation Council (EIC) prepares to launch its 2025 Work Programme, Informatics Europe is worried of the omission of software as a key enabling technology. This oversight is all the more striking given the pervasive impact of software on modern society and the economy.

Software: The Invisible Fabric of Society

Software has become an indispensable component of our daily lives, driving innovation and progress in various sectors, from healthcare to finance, transportation, and education. It underlies critical systems, boosts scientific advancements, and shapes social norms. As Satya Nadella, CEO of Microsoft, aptly put it, "Software is a pervasive driving force of the present world."

The Importance of Software Research

Despite its ubiquity, software research faces significant challenges in Europe. The lack of dedicated funding programs and public-private collaborations hinders innovation, forcing Europe to rely heavily on software solutions from outside Europe. This not only jeopardizes economic growth but also compromises our autonomy and sovereignty.

The EIC Work Programme 2025: A Missed Opportunity

The upcoming EIC Work Programme 2025 focuses on strategic technologies such as artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and biotechnology. While these areas are undoubtedly crucial, the absence of software as a key enabling technology is perplexing. Software is the brain and enabler of the digital society. Software research can thus significantly contribute to critical digital systems that impact both business and society. This research addresses pressing challenges such as ensuring security, correctness, reliability, performance, scalability, safety, and sustainability in complex systems.

Consequences of Neglecting Software Research

Failing to prioritise software research will have far-reaching consequences for Europe's innovation landscape:

1. **Loss of Competitiveness:** Europe risks falling behind other regions that recognize the importance of software research, including the USA and China.
2. **Dependence on Foreign Solutions:** Continued reliance on external software solutions compromises our autonomy, sovereignty and economic growth.
3. **Inadequate Addressing of Societal Challenges:** Software research is essential for addressing pressing societal challenges, such as data protection, cybersecurity, and environmental sustainability.

Recommendation

To rectify this omission, we urge the European Innovation Council to reconsider its 2025 Work Programme and include software as a key enabling technology. This would involve:

1. **Dedicated Funding:** Establishing dedicated funding programs for software research.
2. **Public-Private Collaborations:** Fostering public-private collaborations to leverage Europe's human capital in software research.

Referring to the report "[The future of European competitiveness – A competitiveness strategy for Europe](#)" from the EU Commission, the productivity gap between the EU and the US has mainly been driven by digital technology, with Europe falling behind due to its failure to capitalize on the first digital revolution in the mid-1990s. This includes generating new tech companies and integrating digital technology into the economy. Interestingly, leaving out the tech sector, EU productivity growth over the past twenty years would be similar to that of the US. With this in mind, by recognizing the critical role of software in driving innovation and progress, we can ensure that Europe becomes and remains a leader in shaping the digital future.

ⁱ This open letter was prepared by **Informatics Europe** in November 2024 and co-signed by the following [member National Informatics Associations](#) in March 2025:

- **Informatik Austria** (Austria)
- **SIF – Société Informatique de France** (France)
- **FTI – Fakultätentag Informatik** (Germany)
- **GI – German Informatics Society** (Germany)
- **GRIN – GRuppo di INformatica** (Italy)
- **IPN - ICT-Research Platform Netherlands** (Netherlands)
- **CODDII – Conferencia de Directores y Decanos de Ingeniería Informática** (Spain)
- **SCIE – Sociedad Científica Informática de España** (Spain)
- **SIRA – Swiss Informatics Research Association** (Switzerland)
- **CPHC – Council of Professors and Heads of Computing** (United Kingdom)