



## Henna Virkkunen at WMF: “Europe’s Most Sensitive Data Should Remain in Europe.” Cloud, AI Chips, and Computing Infrastructure at the Core of EU Tech Sovereignty

*The Executive Vice-President of the European Commission for Tech Sovereignty, Security and Democracy opened the third day of WMF – We Make Future 2026 by outlining Europe’s priorities for technological sovereignty, including cloud infrastructure, semiconductors, open source, startups, and AI computing capacity. She highlighted Bologna as a strategic hub for Europe’s AI and high-performance computing ecosystem.*

Bologna, Italy - June 26, 2026

European technological sovereignty, data security, cloud infrastructure, artificial intelligence chips, startups, and high-performance computing were at the heart of the keynote delivered by Henna Virkkunen, Executive Vice-President of the European Commission for Tech Sovereignty, Security and Democracy, who opened the third day of WMF – We Make Future 2026, the International Trade Fair and Festival on Artificial Intelligence, Technology, and Digital Innovation.

In her address, Virkkunen outlined the European Union's approach to technological sovereignty, emphasizing the need to strengthen Europe's capabilities in strategic sectors without resorting to isolationism or protectionism. The objective, she explained, is to reinforce the EU's competitiveness, resilience, and economic security while continuing to work with trusted global partners and maintaining control over critical technologies and European citizens' data.

A central focus of her speech was the forthcoming Cloud and AI Development Act, which she described as one of the cornerstone initiatives of the European Commission's technology sovereignty agenda. The proposal aims to expand Europe's data center capacity while establishing clearer sovereignty requirements for cloud services used by Member States.

"We are proposing that all Member States and governments conduct risk assessments of the cloud services they rely on. In the most sensitive cases, it is important that cloud services are operated by European companies and that data remains stored in Europe," Virkkunen said.

She also highlighted the role of the forthcoming Chips Act 2.0, designed to strengthen the resilience of Europe's semiconductor value chain and expand the continent's capacity to design and manufacture AI chips. A third pillar of the strategy focuses on open-source technologies, which Virkkunen identified as a strategic opportunity to maximize the value of innovation developed in Europe.

The Executive Vice-President also addressed the challenge of scaling European startups. While Europe benefits from world-class research, scientific excellence, industrial capabilities, and thousands of promising startups, she identified market fragmentation as one of the main barriers to growth. To address this issue, she presented the concept of EU Inc., a proposal for a single European corporate framework that would allow startups incorporated in one Member



State to operate more easily across the entire European Union. This initiative would be complemented by a dedicated Scale-Up Fund aimed at supporting the growth of Europe's most innovative companies.

Within the broader European AI strategy, Virkkunen also underscored Italy's—and particularly Bologna's—strategic role in strengthening Europe's technological capabilities. She pointed to the city's world-class supercomputing infrastructure, including one of Europe's most powerful supercomputers and a quantum computer, as a critical resource for startups and companies developing and training next-generation AI models. Access to computing power, she noted, remains one of the most significant barriers facing many European AI startups. To address this challenge, the European Commission is preparing to launch a new call for AI Gigafactories—next-generation computing infrastructures designed to provide Europe with the resources needed to compete globally in artificial intelligence.

Virkkunen also highlighted the outcome of the recent European Grand Challenge on Frontier AI Models, won by an Italian company leading a consortium developing an open-source AI model capable of operating across all 24 official EU languages.

From the WMF Mainstage, Virkkunen delivered a clear message: Europe's technological sovereignty will be built through investment in infrastructure, talent, industrial capacity, data security, and startup growth. Within that strategy, she concluded, Bologna and Italy are uniquely positioned to play a central role in shaping the future of European artificial intelligence thanks to their advanced computing infrastructure and rapidly expanding innovation ecosystem.

WMF – We Make Future is conceived, produced, and organized by Search On Media Group. The event is held under the patronage of the European Parliament, the European Commission, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI), the Emilia-Romagna Region, and the City of Bologna. WMF is supported by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI), the Italian Trade Agency (ITA), and the Emilia-Romagna Region, in partnership with Visit Emilia-Romagna, and in collaboration with BolognaFiere, CINECA, and the European Space Agency (ESA). The 2026 Main Sponsors are Philip Morris, and Dell Technologies and Intel.

## BOILERPLATE

**WMF - We Make Future, is the largest International Trade Fair and Festival dedicated to Artificial Intelligence, Technology, and Digital Innovation.**

From June 24 to 26, 2026, WMF returns to BolognaFiere (Italy) as a certified international event fully focused on the future of innovation. A global hub for the AI and tech ecosystem, WMF brings together each year the most advanced developments in artificial intelligence, digital and social innovation, alongside leading international companies, startups, scaleups, investors, institutions, universities, and non-profit organizations. With over 73,000 attendees from 90 countries in 2025, more than 700 exhibitors, 1,000+ speakers and guests from around the world, 2,800+ organized B2B meetings, and 3,000 startups and investors involved, WMF represents a unique convergence point for innovation-driven business and policy dialogue.

Its partner network includes organizations managing a combined €1.5 trillion investment portfolio, €304+ billion in assets under management (AUM), \$72.8+ billion in funded transactions, and over 17,000 investment rounds, positioning WMF as a global benchmark event for the innovation economy.

[Saudi Makes Future – The Largest AI Exhibition in the Middle East](#)



Saudi Makes Future is the Saudi edition of WMF – We Make Future, a certified international trade fair and global platform for innovation, artificial intelligence, and emerging technologies. Developed through the collaboration between Search On Media Group, WMF – We Make Future, and PNG Saudi, the event will take place December 14–16, 2026, in Riyadh at the Riyadh International Convention & Exhibition Center. Building on WMF’s vision, experience, and thematic architecture, Saudi Makes Future adapts the format to a strong AI-driven focus, structured across 14 strategic sectors exploring the impact of artificial intelligence on business, industry, society, and institutions. Aligned with Saudi Vision 2030, the event positions itself as an international platform for dialogue, cooperation, and development, designed for companies, startups, investors, and stakeholders seeking new opportunities for growth, training, and innovation in the Middle East and on a global scale.

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### Per informazioni e materiale

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