

1. We, the Ministers of Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal and Spain (hereafter referred to as Southern European Countries) have met in Brussels on the 4th of December 2018.

Following the Summits at Head of State level, we view the digital sphere as an ideal policy area to embark on further cooperation. Together, we wish to reflect on our forward-looking vision to make Southern Europe a leader on emerging technologies, such as Distributed Ledger Technologies;

2. We believe that Distributed Ledger Technologies, along with other emerging technologies like 5G, Artificial Intelligence and Internet of Things could be a strong contributor that will help Southern European countries transform the way that we experience as well as to expand their digital ecosystem including Research & Development and innovation;

3. We take note of the fact that the Southern European Union countries have enormous potential for growth in the digital sector as could be seen from the Digital Economy and Society Index. We believe that Distributed Ledger Technologies could be one of the instruments that can help our countries transform their economies and society into truly digital ones and become a leading region in this sector;

4. We believe that Distributed Ledger Technologies can result in further democratization of the European economic model. We strongly believe that the use of such a technology may lead to more cooperation in the Mediterranean basin;

5. As a technology based on trust, we see Distributed Ledger Technologies as being a potential game changer using – inter alia smart contracts in areas such as certifying product origin, education, transport, mobility, shipping, land registry, customs, company registry, and healthcare amongst others to transform the way that such services are delivered. This can result not only in the enhancement of e-government services but also increased transparency and reduced administrative burdens, better customs collection and better access to public information;

6. Due to its nature, we are of the view that Distributed Ledger Technologies can result in enhanced transparency, accountability and privacy for the end-users. In this sense, we believe that the promotion of privacy through blockchain enhanced solutions could be a way forward, empowering citizens to be in control of their own personal data;

7. We believe that it is a responsibility of the governments to ensure that their citizens fully understand the potential of emerging technologies and therefore promote and encourage educational programs on such technologies at all levels;

8. We believe that any legislation on Distributed Ledger Technologies should take into account the decentralized nature of such technology and should be based on European fundamental principles and technological neutrality. It should also allow innovation and experimentations in order for the public and private sector to better understand the Distributed Ledger Technologies and to develop usecases.

Considering this, we call upon the European Commission to continue the work it has already undertaken through the European Blockchain Partnership;

9. We commit ourselves to continue exploring the possibility to cooperate on cross-border Distributed Ledger Technologies projects between the Southern European countries. Potentially this cooperation could also be extended to third countries in the Southern Mediterranean basin;

10. We commit ourselves to hold regular meetings at technical level to ensure that best practices in Distributed Ledger Technologies application are shared with each other in the context of the European Blockchain Partnership;

We commit ourselves to review the progress undertaken by this initiative at regular intervals;

Signed in Brussels, Belgium, on the 4th of December, 2018.