Tech Sector Announces Enhanced Efforts to Combat Forced Localization Policies

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The Information Technology Industry Council (ITI), the global voice of the tech sector, as well as DIGITALEUROPE and the Japan Electronics and Information Technology Association (JEITA), announced that they will intensify their efforts to combat government policies that favor domestic products and services by discriminating against other countries' products and services.

These troubling policies, referred to as "forced localization" measures, restrict innovation and the free flow of data, thereby threatening the decades of economic growth and millions of high-quality jobs tied to the global technology sector. This announcement comes as a result of the associations' third Trilateral Meeting on Forced Localization Measures, which was held at ITI headquarters in Washington, D.C. today.

During the all-day meeting, the associations and their member companies built on the progress they made at their October 2014 meeting in Tokyo, when they issued the "Tokyo Resolution on Combatting Data Localization Requirements." This resolution affirmed the associations' shared commitment to resisting government efforts to require the localization of data and information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure as a condition for doing business in a country.

Meeting participants agreed that government policies mandating localization, whether of the storage or location of data; the provision of services; the development of software; or the manufacture of hardware, remain a top concern for the global ICT industry, as well as companies in all sectors that rely on technology to operate, innovate, and compete in a global economy.

In particular, ITI, DIGITALEUROPE, and JEITA's commitment to intensify their efforts to address localization measures includes:

- Encouraging the governments of their respective economies to accelerate cooperation to aggressively and systematically address localization requirements in priority markets around the world, including, if necessary, through available dispute settlement tools;
  - Asking their governments to elevate forced localization measures as a global economic priority during the 10th World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference in Nairobi in December 2015 and the 2016 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Ministerial Meeting on Maximising the Benefits of the Internet Economy;
  - Involving companies outside the ICT industry in their advocacy efforts, recognizing that localization requirements are not only a technology problem but a global business problem; and
  - Calling on the B20 to elevate forced localization as a top global priority in its upcoming meetings in Turkey in October and press the G20 to agree to concrete measures to combat protectionist and discriminatory localization policies that undermine global trade and investment.