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Marc Murtra: “European sovereignty requires simplifying regulation, building our own technology and accepting the risk to fail”

- Telefónica’s Chairman argued in Barcelona that “building our own technology is the path to defending European values”, linking technological development with strategic autonomy, competitiveness and the defence of Europe’s democratic principles.
- Telefónica reaffirms its commitment to playing a key role in the development of digital infrastructure, connectivity and technological innovation as essential pillars for advancing a European, sovereign and competitive artificial intelligence aligned with the Continent’s values.
- “Europe has the GDP, the talent, the engineers, the companies and the institutions”, Telefónica’s Chairman added.

Madrid, 3 June 2026. Telefónica’s Executive Chairman, Marc Murtra, today argued in Barcelona, during his participation in the 2026 Cercle d’Economia meeting, for the need to accelerate the development of Europe’s own technological capabilities to strengthen its strategic autonomy and ensure the Continent’s competitiveness in an environment shaped by artificial intelligence, quantum computing and new autonomous systems.

During his participation in the roundtable AI and European technological sovereignty, moderated by Cristian Canton, Associate Director of the Barcelona Supercomputing Center, and also featuring Antoine Bordes, Chief Scientist at Helsing, Murtra stressed that Europe has all the necessary elements to lead the next wave of technological innovation, but must act with greater speed, ambition and execution capacity.

Telefónica’s Chairman underlined that technological development has become a determining factor for countries’ economic competitiveness, productivity, resilience and decision-making capacity. In this context, he argued that strategic autonomy does not mean isolation, but rather the ability to develop and control critical capabilities in areas such as energy, digital infrastructure, semiconductors and artificial intelligence.

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“Strategic autonomy is the relevant concept. No economy is completely independent, but Europe must strengthen its capabilities to reduce excessive dependencies in key technologies,” he said.

In this regard, he highlighted the role played by European telecommunications companies as key platforms for the region’s technological development. “We are in an era of scale. If we want to develop technology in Europe, we need to build scale,” he noted.

Murtra stressed that Europe needs, and is strengthening, all the technological layers that underpin artificial intelligence, from energy and infrastructure to specialised models and applications. He also pointed out that Telefónica is contributing to this goal through its networks, digital infrastructure and strategic next-generation projects.

Telefónica’s Chairman argued that digital infrastructure is an essential element for the deployment of artificial intelligence and for ensuring that Europe can develop its own technologies in strategic areas. In this regard, he highlighted Telefónica’s contribution to strengthening Europe’s digital ecosystem through its networks, infrastructure, technological capabilities and projects linked to the development of new digital capabilities.

He also recalled that Telefónica is promoting initiatives aimed at reinforcing Europe’s technological capabilities and the development of strategic infrastructure for the new digital economy.

In this context, he said that Telefónica is undergoing a transformation process to consolidate its position as the best gateway to technology for citizens, companies and public administrations, facilitating the adoption of the digital capabilities that will drive European competitiveness in the coming years.

Murtra also emphasised the importance of fostering closer public-private cooperation, including with European institutions, in order to accelerate innovation and support the growth of technology projects with continental scale.

In his view, European strategic autonomy requires combining investment, industrial capacity, innovation, talent and a shared long-term vision. In this regard, he argued that “building our own technology is the path to defending European values”, while also stressing that “technological development not only strengthens the Continent’s competitiveness and autonomy, but also helps preserve very important values linked to democracy, human dignity and the ability to say what we think”.

Telefónica’s Chairman also defended the need to simplify regulation and focus efforts on generating technology and industrial capabilities. “Simplifying does not mean eliminating regulation, but rather prioritising what drives innovation, competitiveness and strategic autonomy,” he explained.

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During his remarks, he also stressed that “European sovereignty requires simplifying regulation, building our own technology and accepting the risk of failure”, and also pointed out that technological development is a tool to preserve the values that define the European project. “Generating technology not only gives us autonomy; it can also represent very important values linked to democracy, human dignity and freedom,” he said.

Telefónica’s Chairman concluded with a message of confidence in Europe’s ability to lead the next technological revolution: “Europe has the GDP, the talent, the engineers, the companies and the institutions.”