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Gaia-X Appoints New Chair of Governmental Advisory Board to Lead Next Phase of Data Space Adoption



Brussels, 27 April 2026 — Gaia-X AISBL convened its Governmental Advisory Board in Brussels, where participating European member states unanimously approved a shared position marking the transition from foundational development to large-scale market adoption of data spaces in Europe.

The Board acknowledged that the achievements of “Season 1.0” have successfully paved the way for technically interoperable data spaces. Key milestones include the development of a unified architecture and essential building blocks enabling trusted data transactions, alongside organisational frameworks supporting business, legal, and governance interoperability. The Gaia-X Trust Framework now enables automated compliance checking, supported by operational Digital Clearing Houses.

Further progress includes the availability of over 600 cloud and edge services in the CISPE catalogue, with 14 services already complying with Gaia-X Label Level 3 requirements. In parallel, more than 200 use cases have been initiated, ranging from experimental projects to first real-world implementations as demonstrated in the Gaia-X Lighthouse Ecosystems. These efforts are reinforced by the emergence of formal standards through CEN/CENELEC and ISO/IEC.

Building on this foundation, Gaia-X is entering “Season 2.0” of Data Spaces, focusing on accelerating market adoption and delivering tangible economic value. Priorities include establishing economically sustainable operations for data spaces, promoting the uptake

of existing technologies while addressing remaining technical gaps, and enabling the provision of trustworthy data for trustworthy AI applications.

A strong emphasis will also be placed on simplifying participation for small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as advancing cross-data space interoperability to reduce fragmentation and strengthen Europe's strategic data autonomy. Standardisation efforts will continue in close collaboration with European and international bodies.

As a result, Gaia-X is moving towards a future where trust is automated, sovereignty is actionable, and Europe's digital infrastructure is built on shared, secure, and transparent foundations.

During the meeting, the Board also elected Germany, represented by Robert Heinrich, Deputy Director General for Digital Economy, AI and Data Policy at the Federal Ministry for Digital Transformation and Government Modernisation, as the new Chair of the Governmental Advisory Board. He succeeds Thibaut Kleiner and will guide the Board through this next phase of implementation and growth.

Véronique Lacour, Group Senior Executive Vice-President, Transformation and Operational Effectiveness at EDF Group said: "The unanimous approval of this position by member states underscores the maturity of Gaia-X's foundational achievements. As we enter Season 2.0, our focus on secured data spaces and trustworthy AI will empower sectors such as nuclear industry with Data4NuclearX to drive innovation, reinforce operational and economic performance while upholding European values of trust and sovereignty."

Catherine Jestin, Chairwoman of the Board of Directors at Gaia-X AISBL and Executive Vice President Digital and Information Management at Airbus said: "From Season 1.0's technical milestones to Season 2.0's market acceleration, Gaia-X is delivering actionable sovereignty. Simplifying SME participation and cross-data space interoperability will unlock economic value and position Europe as a global leader in trusted digital ecosystems."

Thibaut Kleiner, Director for Future Networks at DG CNECT, European Commission and observer of the Governmental Advisory Board of Gaia-X, stated: "We are proud that EU investments in Simpl and in common European data spaces have built the foundation for trusted and interoperable data sharing. We must now accelerate these efforts, to help make Europe a competitive and sovereign AI Continent."

Robert Heinrich, the newly elected Chair for Gaia-X Governmental Advisory Board, said: "Germany is honoured to assume the Chairmanship at this pivotal moment. With Season 2.0, Gaia-X will prioritise economically viable data spaces, AI trustworthiness, and fragmentation-free interoperability to secure Europe's strategic data and digital

sovereignty for governments and industry alike. The Member States stand ready to provide guidance to the Gaia-X Association as it moves in this direction.”

Ulrich Ahle, CEO of Gaia-X AISBL said: “Today’s approval and leadership transition propel Gaia-X forward. Our automated Trust Framework, growing service catalogue, and 200+ use cases prove we’re ready for market adoption and building a federated infrastructure where trust enables innovation across borders.”