

**AESCON Conference – Scientific Session 4**  
Impact of Covid19 on ASEM's' connectivity agenda



24 September 2020

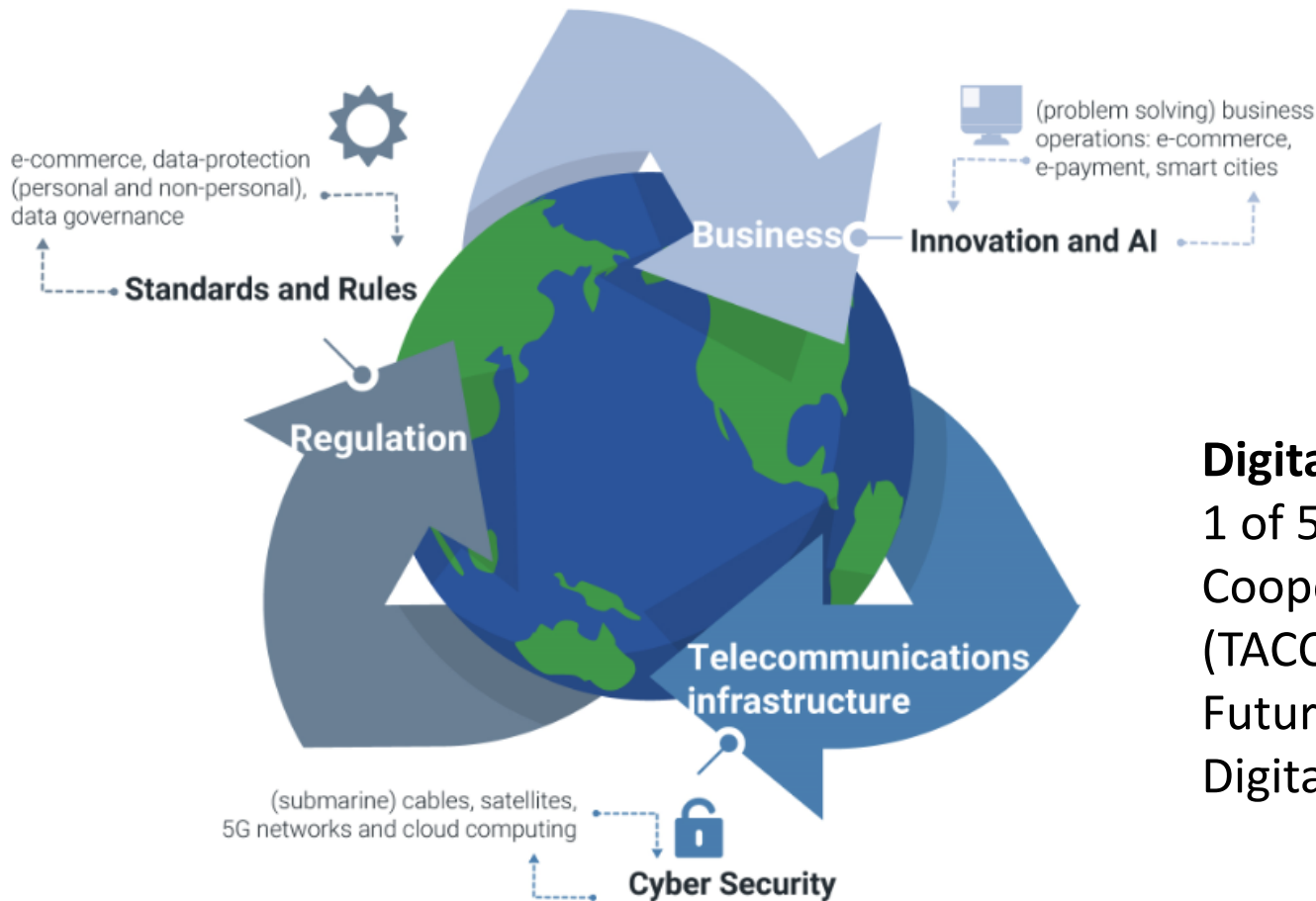
# **ASEM DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY IN THE WAKE OF COVID-19**

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# Digital connectivity: the next great game

4<sup>th</sup> industrial revolution + shifting power balances =  
hardening US-China *trade-tech-data* conflict



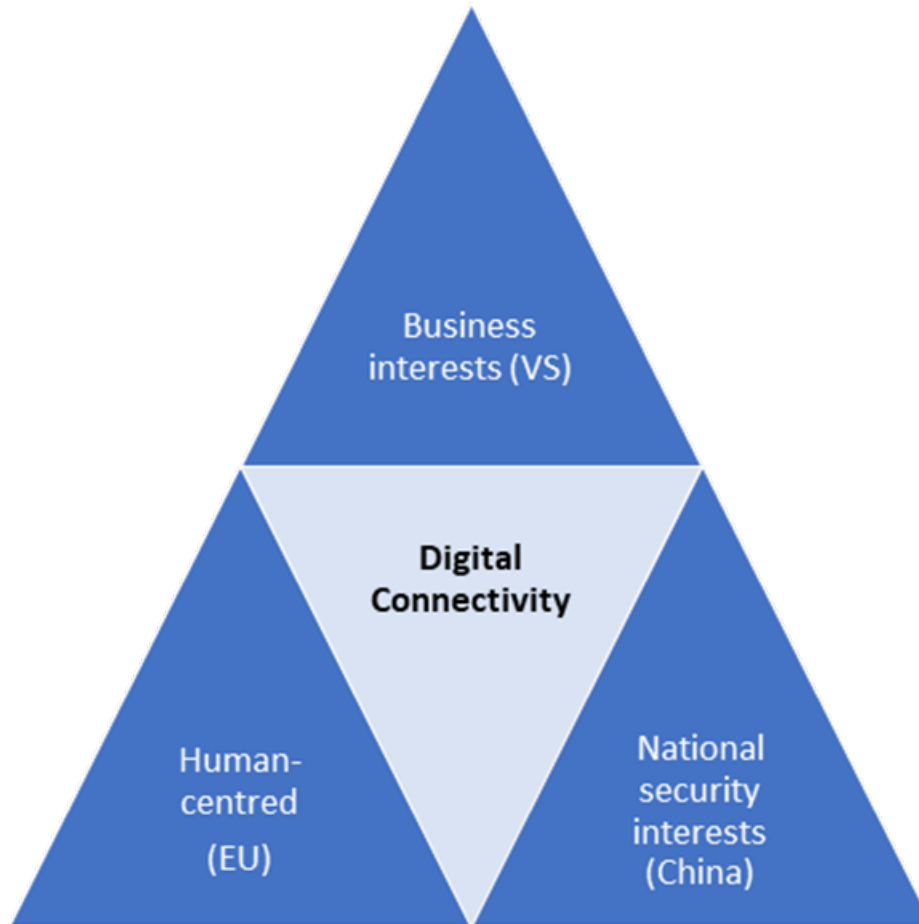
**Digital Connectivity & ASEM**  
1 of 5 Tangible Areas of  
Cooperation in Connectivity  
(TACC), 2018:  
Future Connectivity and the  
Digital Economy

Source: Okano-Heijmans, July [2019](#).

...then what?

# Digital connectivity: the next great game

## Diverging approaches



US' surveillance capitalism

vs. Chinese state surveillance

vs. EU & much of Asia  
'human-centered' approach

Source: Dekker and Okano-Heijmans, forthcoming Clingendael Report 2020.

## Most ASEM members ‘crunched’

US & Chinese tech companies dominate global e-commerce and related market/technical standards



“In the 21st century, those who control digital technologies are increasingly able to influence economic, societal and political outcomes.”  
— EPSC, [Rethinking Strategic Autonomy in the Digital Age](#), 2019

Source: [TIAS](#).

**...then came Covid19:  
the world's first digital pandemic – in terms of origin and effect**

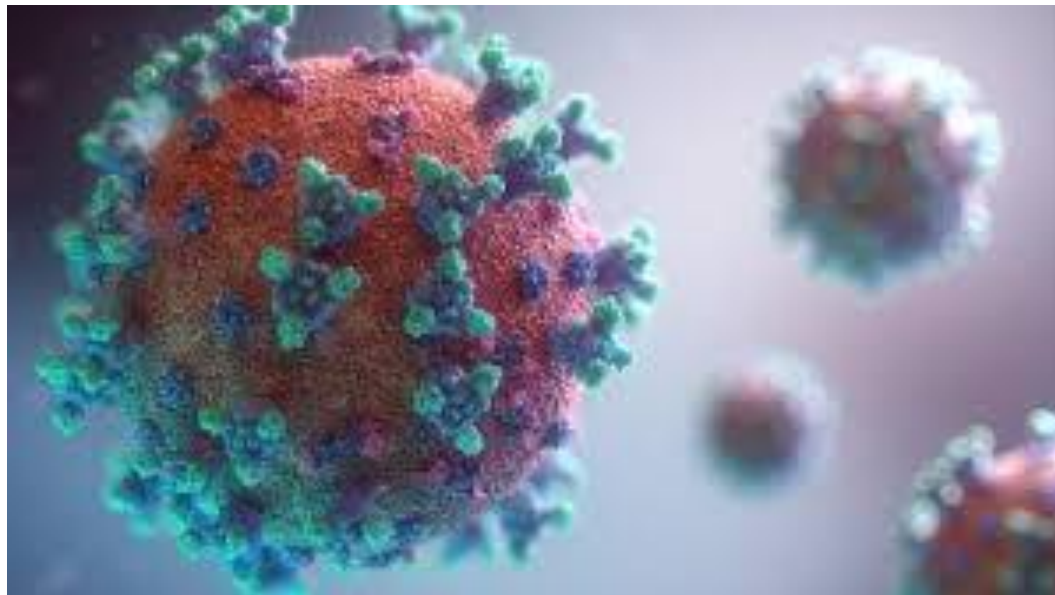
**Covid19 highlights key challenges for ASEM member countries:**

How to shield from challenges coming with (too much) connectivity?

...diverging digital norms (internet freedom) & dependence on global supply chains

How to deal with the hardening US-China tech conflict?

- (new) partners, networked approach → invent new mechanisms, topics
- domestic preparedness → industrial policy 2.0 but prevent protectionism  
...balancing efficiency and resilience, offensive and defensive policies



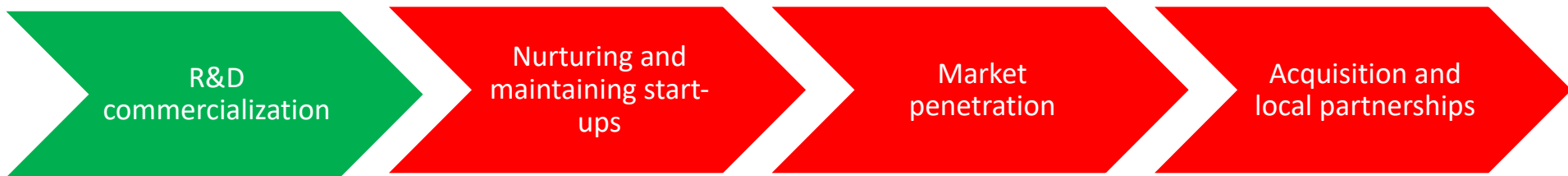
# ASEM's role in digital connectivity (1)

facilitate dialogue...

between governments, and govts with Big/small Tech

(Big) Tech companies: = online platforms / e-commerce companies

→ aim for market presence and market share in the digital economy



- ✓ 'platform fairness': a level-playing field, inclusiveness (rather than lock-in, dependency)
- ✓ personal and non-personal data regulation: open markets, transparency
- ✓ R&D and 'ethical AI': human-centered approach (rather than state interests or business interests first)
- ✓ standard-setting

→ ref. ASEM's successful DG Customs dialogue!

# ASEM's role in digital connectivity (2) manage and steer 'digital ODA'

## Digital Official Development Assistance

- = support to third countries on digital infrastructure; digital competence and the e-economy; regulatory frameworks; and cyber security & resilience
- establish as a cornerstone in ASEM's digital connectivity agenda
- help deliver inclusive and sustainable growth in ASEM countries and beyond

### Existing (competitive?) initiatives include:

- ✓ China's Digital Silk Road (DSR)
- ✓ ROK's Cybersecurity Alliance for Mutual Progress
- ✓ Japan's Strategy for Cyber Security (SCS)
- ✓ EU's Digital for Development (D4D)
- ✓ ASEAN–Singapore Cybersecurity Centre of Excellence (ASCCE)
- ✓ India's Centre for Digital Financial Inclusion (CDFI)



JULY 2019

### How to strengthen Europe's agenda on digital connectivity

Policy Brief

Download [here](#).

MAY 2019

### Engaging but not endorsing China's Belt and Road Initiative

Policy Brief

Download [here](#).

## The US-China trade-tech stand-off

and the need for EU action on export control

Clingendael Report

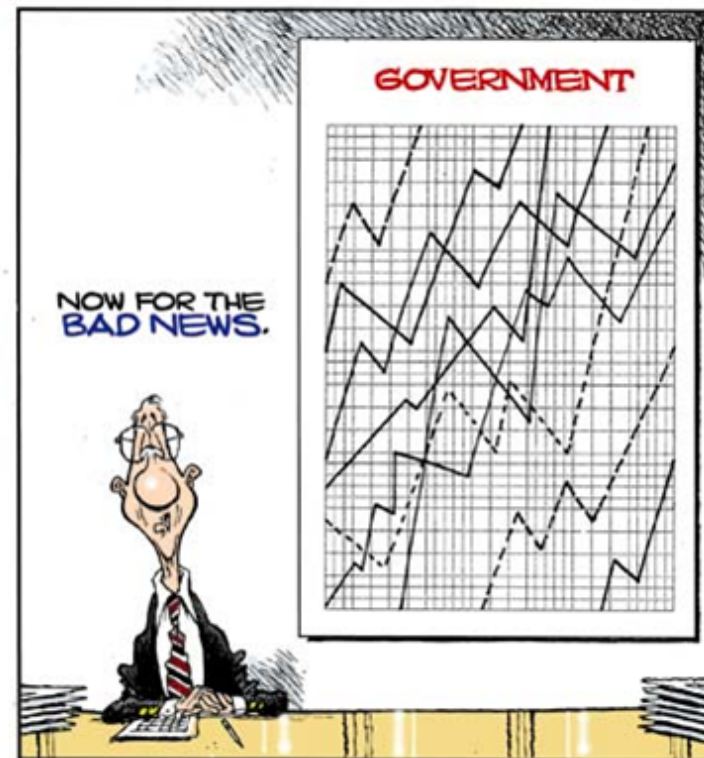
Download [here](#).

MAY 2020

### Digital connectivity going global The case for digital ODA

Policy Brief

Download [here](#).



# Thank you for your attention!

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