Youth Declaration on Digital Resilience

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Executive summary

We are the young people who took part in this Declaration: students, young professionals and international students who live, study and work in France. Our argument is simple. Digital public services and artificial intelligence now shape our daily lives, but being available is not the same as being usable. When a service exists only in French, when no person can be reached after a screen fails, or when an automated decision cannot be explained or challenged, the promises of the European Digital Decade do not reach the people they are meant for. This Declaration sets out recommendations to close that gap between availability and real use.

It sets out sixteen recommendations in three parts: public services that work for the people who use them (Articles 1–9); artificial intelligence we can trust (Articles 10–12); and voice, mediation and territories (Articles 13–16). Two tables follow. Table 1, "Five figures behind this Declaration", gives the evidence from our research that motivates the recommendations. Table 2, "The sixteen recommendations at a glance", lists each recommendation with its main addressees.

Table 1. Five figures behind this Declaration

1.58 / 5	97%	43.5%	6.9 vs 9.0	€62M to €14M
School preparation for online administrative procedures, as rated by the young people we surveyed	of the young people we surveyed use AI; only 21.8% report clear guidance	of the young people we surveyed in France know no public scheme that can help with digital procedures	digital skills score of the young people we surveyed, rural revitalisation zones (ZRR) vs urban areas	Digital Advisors funding, 2024 to 2026

Sources: the first four figures come from our survey of 147 young people in France (D1.2); the funding figures from the Policy Brief (D3.1), the Commission supérieure du numérique et des postes (2024) and the Assemblée nationale (2026). Full references are listed at the end of this Declaration.

Table 2. The sixteen recommendations at a glance

No.	Recommendation	Main addressees
Part I — Public services that work for the people who use them (Articles 1–9)		
1	Digital public services in several languages	DINUM, ministries, operators; European Commission
2	Clear guidance and a real person within reach	DINUM, ANCT, operators
3	One European template for personal documents	European Commission and Parliament; French Government
4	One door, one sign-in, one source of truth	DINUM, ANCT, operators
5	Procedures complete from start to finish	DINUM, ministries, regions
6	Protection from harmful delays and unexplained refusals	Ministries and operators; European Commission
7	University platforms that work	Universities, Higher Education Ministry
8	Services accessible to people with disabilities and to beginners	DINUM, ministries; European Commission
9	Digital and civic education from an early age	Education Ministry, regions, youth services
Part II — Artificial intelligence we can trust (Articles 10–12)		
10	Fair hiring: no gender bias in AI recruitment	EU institutions, labour and equality bodies, employers
11	People in charge: human oversight when AI decides in public services	French Parliament, French Government, oversight bodies
12	Sustainable AI: transparency on energy, water and carbon	EU institutions, Government, data-centre operators
Part III — Voice, mediation and territories (Articles 13–16)		
13	Consult young people regularly and in the open	DINUM, SGPI, ANCT, CESE; European Commission

No.	Recommendation	Main addressees
14	Sustain human mediation: the Digital Advisors	AI and Digital Ministry, French Parliament, ANCT
15	Equal footing for rural and ZRR youth	ARCEP, ANCT, Agriculture Ministry, regions
16	Equal treatment of national and international residents	Interior, CNAF, Action Logement, universities

1. Who are we

We are young people: students, young professionals and international students who live, study and work in France. Digital technology is not a topic for us; it is the setting of our daily lives. We apply for housing aid, student grants and visas on online portals; we look for jobs on platforms that may use algorithms to screen us; we ask chatbots for help and use AI to study and to write; we follow on a screen the decisions that affect us. Adults call us "digital natives", a flattering label that assumes we already know how to do what nobody taught us: claim a housing benefit, read a decision letter, find out whether an algorithm screened our CV, or learn who answers when a system says no. What we found is not a story of failure. France has built a great deal, and much of it works. The problem is the distance between the rule and what we meet in practice: a form only in French, a chatbot with no answer, a refusal with no reason, a recruitment tool no applicant knows is there, a data centre whose water use nobody reports. A form only in French may seem natural in France, but the Digital Decade is a European policy, and its promise of a digital transformation that leaves no one behind applies to everyone who lives in the Union, including those who study, work and live in France and are still learning French. A service that ignores the European diversity of its users is not neutral: it excludes some of them first, and the most vulnerable among them most. Because we use these services every day, we are well placed to say where they work and where they do not.

2. Background and framework

We, the young people who took part in the workshops of Strasbourg and Paris and in the online hackathon **"Beyond the Algorithm"**, gathered by HDRI, declare the sixteen recommendations below, and invite the institutions, companies and organisations they address to answer them. Table 3 lists the legal and policy instruments on which they build.

- Recalling that the European Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles (2022) commits the European institutions to a digital transformation that puts people at the centre and leaves no one behind, and that the Digital Decade policy programme targets 80% of adults with basic digital skills by 2030, against 65.7% in France;
- Noting that 61% of people in France reported difficulties in their administrative procedures in 2025, against 39% in 2016 (Defender of Rights);
- Noting that artificial intelligence is now used to select applicants and to prepare public decisions, and that the AI Act's rules for high-risk systems, as amended in 2026, will apply from December 2027;
- Convinced that a technology should be judged by how it treats those who have the least margin for error, and determined to take part in the decisions that concern us as partners and not only as users.

Table 3. Legal and policy instruments this Declaration builds on.

Instrument	Why it matters here
AI Act, Regulation (EU) 2024/1689	Treats AI used in recruitment and in access to essential public benefits as high-risk: human oversight, transparency, impact assessment for public deployers, right to explanation. Under the 2026 Digital Omnibus agreement, the rules for stand-alone high-risk systems apply from 2 December 2027, not 2 August 2026.
GDPR, Article 22, and the SCHUFA judgment (C-634/21)	Right not to be subject to a solely automated decision with significant effects, and to human intervention. The Court held (7 December 2023) that producing a score can itself be an automated decision when a third party relies on it heavily.

Instrument	Why it matters here
French Digital Republic Act 2016; Code of relations between the public and the administration, Art. L311-3-1 and L312-1-3	Explicit mention on any individual administrative decision based on an algorithm, right to obtain its rules, and publication of the rules of the main algorithmic processes.
Digital Services Act; Web Accessibility Directive; Single Digital Gateway Regulation; European Digital Identity Regulation	Ban on profiling-based advertising to minors; accessible public websites; once-only exchange of documents; digital identity wallets.
Energy Efficiency Directive (EU) 2023/1791; Delegated Regulation (EU) 2024/1364	Data centres of 500 kW or more report energy, water and renewable-energy data to a European database every year since 2024; a rating label is under preparation.

3. The sixteen recommendations

Part I — Public services that work for the people who use them (Articles 1–9)

Article 1 — Digital public services in several languages

"If a service is for everyone, it has to speak more than one language."

What we see. "Most digital information on government websites is only given in French." This is a barrier for international workers, students and migrants still learning French, and the same holds for university and family-benefit websites. Machine translation is now easy. **Evidence.** Online procedures are widely available but remain low on inclusion for vulnerable groups (D1.1). EU law on the Single Digital Gateway already expects key information for cross-border users in a second EU language. A form only in French may seem natural in France, but the Digital Decade is a European policy: its promise to leave no one behind applies to everyone in the Union, and ignoring the European diversity of users excludes the most vulnerable first.

What we ask

1. Offer the key pages and forms of the most used services (residence and visa, family and housing benefits, student aid, health insurance, enrolment) in at least two languages, French and English.
2. Place a visible language selector on the first page of every service.
3. Use machine translation as a labelled complement linked to the official French text, with human checks on legally sensitive pages; the European Commission's eTranslation is open to administrations.
4. Write in plain language, in each language offered.

First step within 12 months. Publish English versions of the ten most used service pages, with a language selector. **Who should act?** DINUM; ministries, CNAF and universities.

Article 2 — Clear guidance and a real person within reach

"A chatbot is not a counter."

What we see. We meet unclear instructions on steps, documents and formats (visa validation, residence permit), chatbots instead of people, and refusals with no reason and no one to contact. We need step-by-step guidance on the first page, and a real place and person when a problem persists, with easy appointments. **Evidence.** The 250 essential online procedures are advanced but low on inclusion (D1.1). 61% of people in France reported difficulties in administrative procedures in 2025, against 39% in 2016 (Defender of Rights). Young people who struggle turn to family and friends, rarely to support structures (D1.2).

What we ask

1. Open every procedure with a checklist: steps, documents, accepted formats and expected time.
2. Offer a visible "talk to a person" option on every service, with a commitment on response time.
3. Let chatbots and AI assistants complement human support, never replace it.
4. Give every refusal in writing, with the reason, how to appeal and a contact point.
5. Make booking an appointment simple and available online.

First step within 12 months. Add a checklist and a human contact option to the ten most used procedures. **Who should act?** DINUM; ANCT and France Services; CNAF, Action Logement, prefectures.

Article 3 — One European template for personal documents

"Europe has one market for students. It should have one paperwork."

What we see. Documents that mean the same thing look different from one EU country to another. Each administration has to interpret them, and newcomers cannot know in advance whether their document will be understood. We propose a common European template for key documents and one platform where documents are uploaded once. **Evidence.** The tools exist in law: once-only exchange (Single Digital Gateway Regulation) and digital identity wallets (Regulation (EU) 2024/1183). They must now cover student mobility and key personal documents in practice.

What we ask

1. Create a common multilingual European template for key personal documents (birth certificate, identity document, driving licence).
2. Take into account student-mobility uses (birth certificate, proof of income, accommodation, enrolment) in the once-only system and the EUDI wallet.
3. Publish and apply a table of equivalence for foreign civil-status and income documents.
4. Have the European Commission and Parliament monitor and report progress.

First step within 12 months. Publish an equivalence table for the ten most common foreign documents. **Who should act?** European Commission and Parliament; French government (DINUM, Interior ministry).

Article 4 — One door, one sign-in, one source of truth

"Fewer passwords, fewer contradictions, one place to look."

What we see. Too many accounts and passwords confuse everyone, especially newcomers and older people. A single portal where each user adds the services they need (CROUS, France Travail) and connects automatically would help. Poor coordination and information quality cause confusion for both users and staff. **Evidence.** Password management is the administrative barrier most reported (59% rural, 71% urban; D1.2). FranceConnect is advanced but accessibility gaps persist, and 43.5% of young respondents know no support scheme.

What we ask

1. Extend FranceConnect and France Identité sign-in to the services of daily life: student life, benefits, employment, transport, health.
2. Offer a personal space where each person chooses which services to link and sees what each can access.
3. Provide one up-to-date source of information per life event, with a named owner and an update date.
4. Align the information of different agencies; an agency that cannot handle a request passes it on instead of sending the user back.

5. Keep an accessible offline alternative to the portal, for people who cannot or prefer not to use digital channels.

First step within 12 months. Extend sign-in to CROUS, the CAF, France Travail and transport passes. **Who should act?** DINUM and ANCT; the operators concerned; transport authorities; the European Commission for cross-border information.

Article 5 — Procedures complete from start to finish

"If it starts on a screen, it should not end in a queue."

What we see. Many procedures begin online and must be finished in person: the annual Navigo pass is requested online but collected in person; family-benefit procedures often need a visit. This hits rural areas, people with reduced mobility and foreigners without a permanent address hardest. We want fully online procedures supported by useful chatbots, human feedback, and upskilling opportunities. **Evidence.** Online procedures have advanced, but they remain insufficiently inclusive. Connection quality also varies between urban areas, rural areas, and priority neighbourhoods (ZRR), particularly among young people (D1.2). Since 2019, the Defender of Rights has warned that online-only procedures exclude the most vulnerable people.

What we ask

1. Audit the most used procedures for online-to-in-person breaks, publish the list and fix the most frequent first.
2. State at the start of each procedure whether an in-person step is needed.
3. Offer remote identity verification and postal alternatives where an in-person step is not essential.
4. Recognise administrative domiciliation for people without a permanent address.
5. Bring counters to people: France Services spaces and mobile counters.

First step within 12 months. Publish the list of procedures that still need an in-person step, and fix the five most frequent. **Who should act?** DINUM and ministries; regional and local authorities; ANCT.

Article 6 — Protection from harmful delays and unexplained refusals

"Waiting should never mean going without."

What we see. People may wait very long for a reply and are then left without resources such as grants, or in critical situations when a visa or social security number is pending. The most exposed are low-income students, workers and foreigners. These in-between situations need safeguards, and a way to monitor and fast-track files. **Evidence.** Digital procedures can fail those with the least margin for error: the non-take-up of rights.

What we ask

1. Publish a maximum response time per procedure, display it at the start and at the end of the procedure, and escalate automatically when it is exceeded.
2. Issue a provisional proof of a pending file that employers, universities and agencies must recognise.
3. Provide a tracking tool showing the status of a file and a named contact.
4. Set up a fast-track for critical cases (loss of income, imminent loss of status).
5. Exchange good practices at European level for cross-border cases.

First step within 12 months. Publish response times for the five procedures that most affect income and issue provisional proofs. **Who should act?** Ministries and operators; the European Commission.

Article 7 — University platforms that work

"A timetable that crashes is not a minor inconvenience."

What we see. University platforms are outdated and user-unfriendly, with few languages; they crash under load, some teachers do not upload content, and the timetable site crashes often and causes delays, especially for international students. **Evidence.** The national digital education strategy is only partly implemented, with disparities between institutions (D1.1).

What we ask

1. Test platforms under realistic load before term and exams.
2. Provide a status page and a fallback such as downloadable timetables.
3. Offer an English interface.
4. Set a minimum standard: all course materials online at the start of term.
5. Train teaching staff, and involve student representatives in testing and governance.

First step within 12 months. Load-test before each term, publish a status page and offer an English interface. **Who should act?** Universities; the Ministry of Higher Education and Research.

Article 8 — Services accessible to people with disabilities and to beginners

"Accessibility is a right, not a feature."

What we see. Sites are hard to navigate: language barriers, a complicated structure, dense formal wording, and few options for people with disabilities such as voice assistance. We ask for translation, an always-available assistance button, and a simpler structure and vocabulary. **Evidence.** EU law requires accessible public websites and apps with an accessibility statement; even advanced services such as FranceConnect still leave gaps for some users.

What we ask

1. Publish real audit results and accessibility statements for the ten most used services.
2. Provide an assistance button on every service, with voice help and an easy-to-read mode.
3. Adopt a plain-language writing standard.
4. Co-design with organisations of people with disabilities, and test every service with beginners.

First step within 12 months. Publish accessibility statements and audits for the ten most used services. **Who should act?** DINUM, which maintains the general accessibility improvement framework (Référentiel général d'amélioration de l'accessibilité, RGAA); ministries and operators; the European Commission.

Article 9 — Digital and civic education from an early age

"We should learn how the system works before we need it."

What we see. Young people struggle to understand and complete online procedures and nothing trains them for it. Girls are excluded by early socialisation, and isolated young people without family support are left behind. We propose classes from an early age mixing civic and technology education (EMC and Pix), and free equipment for training. **Evidence.** School preparation for digital life is rated 2.15/5 and for administrative procedures 1.58/5; 97% use AI but only 21.8% report clear guidance; women are 19.6% of ICT specialists in France.

What we ask

1. Add a practical module on real procedures to civic education and Pix, before age 16.
2. Give every school clear guidance on AI, and teach it.
3. Set measurable goals for girls' participation in digital education, and mentoring in the least advantaged areas.
4. Provide free access to equipment and connected places in libraries and youth centres.

5. Support isolated young people through youth workers and associations.

First step within 12 months. Pilot the module in a first group of schools and publish AI guidance. **Who should act?** Ministries of Education and Higher Education; regions and local authorities; youth organisations.

Part II — Artificial intelligence we can trust (Articles 10–12)

Article 10 — Fair hiring: no gender bias in AI recruitment

"If a machine screens our CV, it must not screen out our gender."

What we see. Automated recruitment systems risk perpetuating and amplifying gender discrimination through biased training data and decision-making that reinforces historical inequalities in employment. **Evidence.** The AI Act classes recruitment AI as high-risk; under the 2026 Digital Omnibus the rules apply from 2 December 2027. A 2024 audit of AI resume-screening models found white-associated names preferred in 85.1% of cases and female-associated names in only 11.1% (Wilson and Caliskan, 2024). Cities such as New York already show what is possible: since 2023, New York City has required annual independent bias audits and notice to candidates for automated hiring tools. France and Europe can do the same.

What we ask

1. Remove gender markers and gender-identifiable information from initial application materials processed by AI recruitment systems, while keeping the means for employers to meet diversity commitments through human oversight at later stages.
2. Require comprehensive audits of the training datasets of recruitment AI to eliminate sources of gender bias, especially historical hiring patterns.
3. Require developers to demonstrate gender-neutral performance through regular bias testing and impact assessments by independent third parties.
4. Require human review at critical decision points, so diversity objectives and fair hiring are maintained without weakening bias mitigation.
5. Oblige employers using AI recruitment tools to tell applicants, explain how automated decisions are made and offer human review.

What the evidence adds

- Test for proxies. Removing names and gender markers is necessary but not sufficient: bias can persist through other signals, so audits should test outcomes by gender.
- Publish the results. Summaries of independent bias audits should be public, as in New York City.
- Keep a human route. On request, an applicant can be assessed without an AI screening system.

First step within 12 months. Public employers and public employment services apply bias audits and candidate notice to any AI recruitment tool now, ahead of December 2027; equality bodies publish guidance. **Who should act?** EU legislators and the Commission; French labour, equality and data protection authorities (Defender of Rights, CNIL, DGT); employers and AI developers.

Article 11 — People in charge: human oversight when AI helps decide in public services

"No algorithm should have the last word on our rights."

What we see. AI in public administration puts fundamental rights, due process and democratic accountability at risk when automated decisions affect access to benefits, services and legal protection without adequate human oversight or transparency. **Evidence.** We face rejected files with no reason and nobody to contact. Europe has seen the cost: in the Netherlands a nationality-based risk-scoring algorithm contributed to tens of thousands of parents—disproportionately from immigrant and low-income backgrounds— being wrongly flagged and accused of fraud, and the government resigned in January 2021. In France, civil-society organisations have challenged the

family-allowance fund's risk scoring before the Conseil d'État since October 2024; the fund says an agent decides on checks. We take no position on that case; it shows why oversight, explanation and audit must exist before a dispute. The law already points the way: the GDPR's human intervention; the SCHUFA ruling (a score can itself be a decision); French law since 2016 requiring an explicit mention on algorithm-based decisions.

What we ask

1. Enshrine in law meaningful human oversight at all stages of AI-assisted decision-making in public services; final decisions on individual rights remain subject to human judgment.
2. Define in law when and how AI may be used in public administration, with explicit legislative authorisation for automated decisions affecting fundamental rights, benefit eligibility or access to services.
3. Mandate a human in the loop for all high-stakes decisions, and prohibit full automation in criminal justice, social welfare, immigration, healthcare access and other areas with significant human-rights implications.
4. Require transparency and explainability: affected people can understand how a decision was made, what data was used and the reasoning behind recommendations.
5. Guarantee a right to appeal and to timely human review by qualified decision-makers with authority to override algorithmic outputs.
6. Assign legal responsibility for AI failures, discriminatory outcomes or rights violations to identifiable human actors within public institutions.
7. Require regular algorithmic impact assessments and human-rights audits, published and open to review by independent oversight bodies, civil society and affected communities.
8. Train public servants to understand AI's limits, recognise bias and keep the capacity for independent judgment.

What the evidence adds

- Make oversight meaningful. A person who only validates a score is not oversight: the reviewer needs competence, time, information and authority to disagree.
- Apply the law that exists. Add the explicit mention to every algorithm-based individual decision and publish the rules of the main algorithmic processes.
- Keep a public register. One list of algorithmic systems used in decisions about individuals, each with a plain-language description, purpose and last audit date.

First step within 12 months. Publish the register, apply the explicit mention to each system, and commission independent audits of the largest risk-scoring systems. **Who should act?** French Parliament and Government; DINUM and ministries that deploy automated systems; the CNIL and the Defender of Rights; the European Commission and the European AI Office.

Article 12 — Sustainable AI: transparency on energy, water and carbon

"If AI runs on our water and our grid, we have a right to see the bill."

What we see. The rapid expansion of AI and data-centre infrastructure has significant environmental impacts through energy, water and carbon emissions, often without adequate public disclosure or accountability. **Evidence.** Data centres used about 415 TWh in 2024 (1.5% of world electricity) and are heading for about 945 TWh by 2030, with local impacts far larger than the global share suggests (IEA, 2025). EU operators of 500 kW or more report energy and water data yearly, but the European database publishes aggregated EU and country figures.

What we ask

1. Establish mandatory environmental impact reporting for AI systems and data-centre operators: energy, water, carbon footprint, renewable versus non-renewable energy.

2. Require data centres to publish impact assessments of their effects on local communities: water resources, grid capacity, regional climate goals.
3. Develop standardised metrics to measure the footprint of training and deploying AI models, so providers can be compared.
4. Ensure regulatory oversight of minimum standards, with targets for renewable energy, water efficiency and carbon neutrality aligned with climate commitments.
5. Create incentives that reward sustainable AI development and penalise excessive resource consumption.
6. Require regular public reporting accessible to affected communities, civil society and environmental regulators.

What the evidence adds

- Report site by site. Communities live next to a site, not a national average: publish energy, water and grid data for each data centre, protecting only what security requires.
- Count the water. Publish water use and its origin, especially in areas facing water stress.
- Use public procurement. Public buyers of AI services should ask for the energy and water footprint and weigh it in the award.

First step within 12 months. Make site-level energy and water data public for data centres in France, and add footprint disclosure to public AI procurement. **Who should act.** The European Commission and Parliament; the French Government, including the ecological transition ministry and ADEME; hosting local authorities; operators and AI providers.

Part III — Voice, mediation and territories (Articles 13–16)

Article 13 — Consult young people regularly and in the open

"Nothing about us without us, and a receipt for what we said."

What we see. We use digital services every day, yet we are rarely asked how they should be designed or how technology policy should be made, and we are never told what happened to what we said. **Evidence.** The consultation gap analysis (D1.3) found less a lack of dialogue than a lack of visibility: public documents do not show who was consulted, how, or with what follow-up. None of the 56 high-school students we met knew the Digital Decade, and the Agora participation app is rated limited.

What we ask

1. Publish a participation framework for the roadmap: who is consulted, how, when and with what follow-up.
2. Run a yearly consultation cycle, nationally and in the territories, feeding France's National Digital Decade Strategic Roadmap (updated every two years and submitted to the European Commission), including on AI in public services.
3. Give young people a regular place through schools, agricultural schools, universities, youth councils and student organisations.
4. Publish after each consultation a short account of what was said and done.
5. Recognise mediation structures and civil society as sources of evidence.
6. Organise a citizens' convention (convention citoyenne) on artificial intelligence at the Conseil économique, social et environnemental (CESE) to debate how AI should be used in public services, work and education.

First step within 12 months. Publish the framework and hold the first annual youth consultation, followed by a "you said, we did" report; ask the CESE to organise a citizens' convention on AI. **Who should act?** DINUM (annual summary); the Conseil économique, social et environmental (CESE), with

the Prime Minister and Parliament (convention on AI); SGPI (participation criteria in France 2030); ANCT; the European Commission.

Article 14 — Sustain human mediation: the Digital Advisors

"A person at the other end is the cheapest safeguard there is."

What we see. We need a real person at every step, in public services and in decisions made with AI. In France the Conseillers Numériques France Services (Digital Advisors) provide that person in town halls, libraries, France Services spaces and associations. **Evidence.** Monitoring of the scheme calls it the last line of defence against the non-take-up of rights. State funding has fallen from about €62M in 2024 to about €40M in 2025 and €13.8M in 2026; state-supported posts are projected to fall from nearly 4,000 to about 1,400 by end-2026, with the national co-financing programme expected to end or be drastically reduced in 2027.

What we ask

1. Restore multi-year funding of at least three years.
2. Create a National Digital Inclusion Fund combining State, local, European and private contributions, as proposed by the Commission supérieure du numérique et des postes (CSNP).
3. Recognise the role as a lasting profession with a career path.
4. Direct remaining capacity first to structures with high youth footfall: Missions Locales, CROUS residences, lycées, youth information points.
5. Keep this human support alongside the roll-out of AI in public services, not in its place.

First step within 12 months. Guarantee funding for the 2027 posts for at least three years and publish the allocation criteria. **Who should act?** Ministry for AI and Digital Affairs; DINUM; ANCT; French Parliament; the European Commission.

Article 15 — Equal footing for rural and ZRR youth

"Where we live should not decide how well the system works for us."

What we see. Problems weigh most on people in rural areas and with reduced mobility, notably procedures that must be finished in person. **Evidence.** Young people in ZRR score 6.9 on the digital skills index against 9.0 for urban youth, a significant difference that persists when age and opportunities are taken into account; connection quality also differs. Effective 5G availability is about 22% in urban and 13.5% in rural areas. The ZRR sample is small (9 respondents), so results are indicative.

What we ask

1. Include ZRR youth as a category in national indicators of digital skills and connectivity.
2. Prioritise ZRR in connectivity deployment, with binding quality-of-service targets.
3. Bring mediation to where people are: France Services, mobile counters, schools, agricultural schools.
4. Commission larger, dedicated research on rural youth.

First step within 12 months. Add ZRR youth to the national indicators and publish connectivity quality targets for ZRR. **Who should act?** ARCEP; ANCT; the Ministry of Agriculture; regions; the European Commission and Parliament (cohesion policy).

Article 16 — Equal treatment of national and international residents

"We are not an exception to the form. We are a user group."

What we see. Working independently, several of our groups described the same experience: procedures designed for national residents, with websites and processes that offer no human interface in other languages and no section for international students and workers, identity

recognised only under French rules, an in-person step at an office that is hard to reach, and a housing guarantee refused with no reason although identical documents had been accepted for others. We are not asking for a different status: we are asking to be treated like any other user of the same procedure. **Evidence.** The same pattern across our groups points to a systemic problem, and to the consultation gap: those concerned rarely help design the procedures that concern them. For European citizens, equal treatment with nationals within the scope of the Treaties is guaranteed by Article 24 of Directive 2004/38/EC.

What we ask

1. Apply to international residents the same standards of clarity, response times and written reasons as to national residents, and monitor any difference.
2. Review the procedures that international residents use most (residence, housing aid, health insurance, banking, transport) and remove the steps that assume French documents, a French identity or a French address.
3. Publish clear lists of accepted documents and recognised foreign equivalents, and give the reason for any refusal.
4. Involve international residents in designing and testing the procedures that concern them, through a standing panel, before new procedures are launched.
5. Name a contact point for each procedure, reachable in at least two languages.

First step within 12 months. Set up a panel of international students and residents to review the five procedures they use most, and publish its findings. **Who should act?** Ministry of the Interior and prefectures; CNAF; Action Logement; CROUS and universities; DINUM and ANCT.

4. How this Declaration was written

This Declaration is part of the project Youth-Led Monitoring for a Resilient Digital France (YLM-RDF) of the Human Development Research Initiative (HDRI). The project runs from April to November 2026, implemented with the support of the European Citizen Action Service (ECAS) under EURECA Plus 2026, and is co-funded by the European Union. Its aim is to monitor, with young people, how far France is delivering the 2030 targets of the European Digital Decade in four areas: digital skills, digital infrastructure, the digital transformation of businesses and the digitalisation of public services.

More than 100 of us took part across the three events listed in Table 4. We grouped the workshop sheets by theme and wrote them up as Articles 1–9 and Article 16, keeping our own examples and proposals. The hackathon recommendations are kept in full as Articles 10–12, lightly edited. We added Articles 13–15 from our research and checked every recommendation against current research, case law and legislation (October 2026); where research adds a point of its own, it is labelled "What the evidence adds" and our own text is never changed. The articles are not ranked.

Table 4. Three moments of consultation

Event	Date and place	What happened
Strasbourg workshop	28 September 2026, European Parliament	Young people deliberated on digital public services, with contributions from the Council of Europe's Youth Department and ECAS.
Paris workshop	30 September 2026, Maison Étudiante 6e	Same format, with a keynote by a researcher of INSEE.
"Beyond the Algorithm" hackathon	28 October 2026, online	A free policy hackathon on AI and human rights, with a guest expert of the European Policy Centre (EPC).

Limits. We are a limited sample of young people in France: most of us are students or young professionals, and the hackathon was online and self-selected. We are directly affected by what we describe, which is the strength of this Declaration, but our findings are indicative and do not represent all young people. Our survey is concentrated in western France, with only 9 of 147 respondents in a ZRR. The rules on AI are changing fast: the legal status described here is that of October 2026.

5. Turning recommendations into delivery: the questions ahead

"Isn't this too expensive?" Many recommendations cost little: a checklist, a status page, a free translation tool, a published response time. What is expensive is failure: lost files and unexplained refusals bring people back again and again, or make them give up their rights. Digital Advisor funding fell from about €62M to about €14M in two years; the needs did not fall with it.

"Won't human oversight slow everything down?" Oversight matters where the stakes are high, and that is where we ask for it. The Dutch childcare benefits scandal (the toeslagenaffaire) shows the price of an error that runs at the speed of a computer, and the SCHUFA ruling shows that a human who simply signs off a score is not oversight.

"The AI Act has just been delayed. Why ask for more?" The 2026 Digital Omnibus moved the high-risk rules to December 2027. It did not move the GDPR, French law on algorithmic decisions or equality law, which apply today. The months in between are a chance to prepare.

"Who do you speak for?" For ourselves, and for what we saw and tested. We are a limited sample of young people in France, directly affected by what we describe, and this Declaration says so. We ask for comments and for endorsements, because a Declaration grows stronger with every signature.

These questions come down to what should happen, and when. Table 5 sets out a proposed timeline for the sixteen recommendations, from the first steps within twelve months to the Digital Decade targets of 2030, together with the evidence by which progress will be known. It is a proposal to the institutions concerned, not a commitment already made by them.

Table 5. From recommendations to delivery

Horizon	What should happen	How we will know
Within 12 months (autumn 2027)	The first step of each article; a register of algorithmic systems; site-level data on data centres; independent audits of recruitment and risk-scoring tools in the public sector; a youth consultation framework; funding secured for Digital Advisors.	Published lists and dated reports
December 2027 (AI Act high-risk rules)	Human oversight, impact assessments, explanation and appeal rights in place for AI used in recruitment and public benefits.	Impact assessments and audit summaries published
2030 (Digital Decade)	80% of adults with basic digital skills; the ZRR–urban gap closed; sustainable AI infrastructure with public reporting.	Digital Decade indicators; our survey repeated

Indicators. Alongside the timeline in Table 5, we will follow nine indicators: (1) share of the ten most used services complete in at least two languages; (2) share of procedures with published response times, tracking and written reasons; (3) public services with a published accessibility audit; (4) algorithmic systems in a public register with an impact assessment; (5) AI recruitment tools of public employers with a published independent audit; (6) data-centre sites in France with public site-level data; (7) annual youth consultations held and "you said, we did" reports; (8) funded Digital Advisor posts, and their share in youth-facing structures and ZRR; (9) the ZRR–urban skills gap in the next wave of our survey. These are indicators we propose, not existing official statistics. The institutions concerned would publish the data they hold, such as accessibility statements, response times and the register of algorithmic systems (indicators 1 to 8); we offer to check the published data and to report on progress each year, and we would measure indicator 9 by repeating our survey.

6. To whom this Declaration is addressed

We will transmit the final Declaration to the institutions listed in Table 6 and ask each of them to examine the articles that concern them and let us know what follows.

Table 6. Institutions to which this Declaration is addressed

Institution	Articles
Ministry for AI and Digital Affairs; DINUM; ANCT and France Services	1–5, 8, 11, 13–16
SGPI (France 2030)	13
Conseil économique, social et environnemental (CESE); Prime Minister	13
Ministry of the Interior and prefectures; CNAF and CAF; Action Logement	2–3, 6, 11, 16
Ministries of Education and Higher Education; universities; CROUS	7, 9, 16
Ministry of Labour; DGT, France Travail; employers	10
Ecological transition ministry; ADEME; local authorities hosting data centres	12
CNIL; Defender of Rights; Arcom; ARCEP; Ministry of Agriculture	8, 10–11, 15
French Parliament and local authorities	5, 11, 14
European Commission (DG CONNECT, AI Office); European Parliament (IMCO, LIBE, ITRE, EMPL, CULT); EESC; Committee of the Regions	1, 3, 6, 8, 10–15

What happens next. This Declaration is final. We thank everyone who sent comments during the consultation. It is published in English and French, and we are sending it to the institutions listed above. Individuals, youth groups and organisations that share its aims are invited to endorse it by writing to info@hdevri.org. We remain available to every institution for dialogue, clarification or consultation on any article.

Our closing statement

In three rooms, two real and one virtual, we found that we agreed on more than we expected. We want technology that works, in the language we speak, with a person at the other end when it does not. We want machines that never take the last decision on our rights, and a hiring process that sees our skills and not our gender. We want an infrastructure whose costs to the planet are written down, public and compared. And we want to be asked, regularly and in the open, before decisions are taken in our name. We are not against the future; we intend to live in it. That is why we ask that it be built so that all of us can use it, trust it and hold it to account.

7. About this Declaration, the project and its funding

Table 7 summarises what this document is, the project and the organisation behind it, and the programme that supports it, and lists the related publications, so that readers can place the Declaration in context.

Table 7. This Declaration and the project at a glance

Item	Information
This document	2026 Youth Declaration on Digital Resilience, deliverable D2.2 of the project, produced in Work Package 2 (deliberative youth workshops). English version; French version to follow.
Project	Youth-Led Monitoring for a Resilient Digital France (YLM-RDF), April to November 2026. www.hdevri.org/ylm-rdf
Implementing organisation	Human Development Research Initiative (HDRI), a youth-led non-profit association (loi 1901), 50 Rue des Tournelles, 75003 Paris. info@hdevri.org
Programme and support	EURECA Plus 2026, Lot 2: Civic Monitoring for Digital Resilience, run by the European Citizen Action Service (ECAS). Funding: co-funded by the European Union.
Related publications	Comprehensive Monitoring Report on France's Digital Roadmap (D1.1); Data Set: Mapping Youth Digital Exclusion in Rural France (D1.2); Consultation Gap Note, Policy Brief and Stakeholder Mapping (D1.3); Policy Brief "Digital Decade 2030: From Access to Use" (D3.1).

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Glossary

ANCT: national agency for territorial cohesion, which runs the France Services network. CESE: Economic, Social and Environmental Council, the French assembly representing organised civil society. CNAF/CAF: family allowance funds. CROUS: student services. DINUM: inter-ministerial digital directorate. Digital Advisors: Conseillers Numériques France Services. Digital Omnibus: 2025–2026 EU package amending digital laws; its AI part postponed the AI Act's high-risk rules to December 2027. Human in the loop: a person reviews and can override an automated output before it takes effect. SGPI: General Secretariat for Investment (France 2030). ZRR: rural revitalisation zones.

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