

1. Human rights should never be taken for granted. We must continuously work to defend and preserve them. In recent years, we have observed the fragility of the rule of law and other fundamental values in our democratic institutions that Europeans share with many other places in the world.
2. Bolstered by the Lisbon Treaty, which puts the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights on an equal footing with the Treaties, data protection has, in the last decade, become, a bulwark for most, if not for all democratic rights and freedoms. This is particularly important for those in a position of vulnerability, such as children and the elderly, patients or mentally ill person, asylum seekers or even employees under some circumstances of power imbalance.
3. Technological advances, occurring thanks to human ingenuity and ability to derive insights from experience, are, nowadays, particularly driven by personal data. The companies that have exploited these technologies have become the most valuable in the world, dominating not only their respective markets but also global information flows.
4. The health crisis has elevated the importance of the digital economy, as well as the need for effective guarantees concerning data protection and privacy. Communication networks, data and devices are employed today on a large scale, as part of our collective efforts to manage the crisis and restore the European economy and this will still be the case, for the months and years to come.

