

THE TECHNOLOGICAL SOVEREIGNTY DEBATE IS SOLVING THE WRONG PROBLEM

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Europe's debate on technological sovereignty is often framed too broadly, but the central challenge is more practical: how to manage risk without undermining competitiveness. Rather than treating sovereignty as an abstract political objective, the discussion positioned it as a question of capability, resilience and strategic choice. The issue is not whether Europe can or should separate itself from global technology systems, but how it can manage specific dependencies while remaining competitive.

The discussion highlighted the trade-offs involved in technology policy. Greater sovereignty may reduce some dependencies, but it can also increase costs, reduce



access to best-in-class technology, and weaken competitiveness if not approached carefully. Market demand is also important. While many organisations may support sovereign solutions in principle, willingness to pay more for them is often limited.

This complexity is particularly visible in Europe's energy dependence, which remains a structural vulnerability, while China's dominance in manufacturing continues to shape global market dynamics. At the same time, technology and artificial

intelligence are supporting ongoing demand and economic activity, suggesting that the global economy remains resilient despite significant geopolitical pressure.

Key takeaways

- Technological sovereignty should be approached as a risk management challenge rather than a purely political objective.
- Global technology systems are becoming more fragmented as geopolitical pressures increase.
- Policy ambition does not always align with what customers are willing to pay for.
- Organisations must balance cost, resilience and competitiveness



"IT'S A GROWTH MARKET."

Ansgar Baums, Microsoft

when making technology decisions.

- Building strong technological capability is more effective than focusing only on reducing dependency.
- Europe needs stronger innovation funding and scaling mechanisms to compete globally.

Overall insight

Technological sovereignty is ultimately a competitiveness challenge, not just a question of control. Europe's long-term resilience will depend on its ability to build globally relevant technology capabilities, while managing dependencies in a way that supports innovation, scale, and strategic choice.



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Speaker Biography

Ansgar Baums is General Manager and member of the management board of Microsoft Germany. Prior to Microsoft, he worked on geopolitical risk consulting and published two books on this topic. He held management positions at companies like Zoom, HP Inc., Hewlett-Packard, and SAP.

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