

Macron wants to make France gateway to Europe for tech firms

May 24 2018



A show tech goer takes a selfie with French President Emmanuel Macron, center, as Rwanda's President Paul Kagame, second right, stands second right, at the VivaTech gadget show in Paris, Thursday, May 24, 2018. Macron took on Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg and other internet giants Wednesday at a Paris meeting to discuss personal data protection and taxes as France pushes for tougher European regulations. (AP Photo/Michel Euler, Pool)

French President Emmanuel Macron called on tech leaders Thursday to invest in France, saying his innovation policies aim to make the country the gateway to Europe.

Speaking partly in English in front of CEOs and other tech industry leaders, Macron said "it's because France is changing like crazy that we can say that France is back and you could choose France."

He said his labor policy changes have boosted investment in the country over the past year. The changes, notably aimed at giving employers more flexibility to hire and fire, have prompted a series of strikes and protests against what unions see as weakening workers' rights.

The speech at the Vivatech trade show in Paris came a day after Macron met Facebook, Microsoft, Uber, IBM and other CEOs to discuss personal [data protection](#) and taxes, among other issues.

The French president pushed for tougher EU regulations and a European digital tax. "Those who innovate in France, they pay taxes... We are decreasing these taxes. Fine. But it's not fair when somebody else pays no tax," he said.

Privacy was another issue Macron raised as a tough new European data protection law comes into effect this week. The so-called GDPR regulation will give Europeans more control over what companies can do with what they post, search and click.



French President Emmanuel Macron gestures as he speaks to participants at the VivaTech gadget show in Paris, Thursday, May 24, 2018. Macron took on Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg and other internet giants Wednesday at a Paris meeting to discuss personal data protection and taxes as France pushes for tougher European regulations. (AP Photo/Michel Euler, Pool)

Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella said in a speech Thursday that "with GDPR, we will now have to operate recognizing that privacy is a human right." Microsoft said this week it would apply European data rights to all its clients worldwide.

Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg, also speaking at the conference, said GDPR means adding some controls, but he insisted it is "not a massive departure" from what Facebook does.

At a hearing Tuesday in the European Parliament in Brussels, Zuckerberg acknowledged a "mistake" and apologized for the way the social network has been used to produce fake news and interfere in elections.

In response to a question Thursday, Zuckerberg said he had not foreseen the "huge" responsibility Facebook faces today when he was building the company "as a college service."



French President Emmanuel Macron, right, chats with Rwanda's President Paul Kagame at the VivaTech gadget show in Paris, Thursday, May 24, 2018. Macron took on Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg and other internet giants Wednesday at a Paris meeting to discuss personal data protection and taxes as France pushes for tougher European regulations. (AP Photo/Michel Euler, Pool)

"We need to do a more proactive job," Zuckerberg said. He cited taking

down "inappropriate content" linked to everything from extremism to bullying.

Other mea culpas included failing to spot Russian interference. In 2016, he said, "we were slow to identify Russian interference in the U.S. election."

Facebook has tools "that can now take down proactively thousands and thousands of fake accounts that might be trying to spread misinformation," Zuckerberg said.

He said the company also has taken steps to make political ads "much more transparent."

"There's a lot more that we need to do here, but we're really focused on this," he said.



French President Emmanuel Macron, right, shakes hands with a tech show goer at the VivaTech gadget show in Paris, Thursday, May 24, 2018. Macron took on Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg and other internet giants Wednesday at a Paris meeting to discuss personal data protection and taxes as France pushes for tougher European regulations. (AP Photo/Michel Euler, Pool)



Rwanda's President Paul Kagame, 3rd left, and French President Emmanuel Macron, 4th left, pose with business men of Rwanda at the VivaTech gadget show in Paris, Thursday, May 24, 2018. Macron took on Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg and other internet giants Wednesday at a Paris meeting to discuss personal data protection and taxes as France pushes for tougher European regulations. (AP Photo/Michel Euler, Pool)



CEO of Spoon.ai Jerome Monceaux, left, points to a screen as he talks to LVMH luxury group CEO Bernard Arnault, center, and French President Emmanuel Macron as they visit the VivaTech gadget show in Paris, Thursday, May 24, 2018. Macron took on Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg and other internet giants Wednesday at a Paris meeting to discuss personal data protection and taxes as France pushes for tougher European regulations. (AP Photo/Michel Euler, Pool)



From left to right, LVMH luxury group CEO Bernard Arnault, Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella, Rwanda President Paul Kagame, French President Emmanuel Macron and IBM's President and CEO Virginia Rometty attend the opening of the VivaTech gadget show in Paris, Thursday, May 24, 2018. Macron took on Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg and other internet giants Wednesday at a Paris meeting to discuss personal data protection and taxes as France pushes for tougher European regulations. (AP Photo/Michel Euler, Pool)



From left to right, LVMH luxury group CEO Bernard Arnault, Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella, Rwanda President Paul Kagame, French President Emmanuel Macron and IBM's President and CEO Virginia Rometty attend the opening of the VivaTech gadget show in Paris, Thursday, May 24, 2018. Macron took on Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg and other internet giants Wednesday at a Paris meeting to discuss personal data protection and taxes as France pushes for tougher European regulations. (AP Photo/Michel Euler, Pool)



Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella speaks during the opening of the VivaTech gadget show in Paris, Thursday, May 24, 2018. Macron took on Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg and other internet giants Wednesday at a Paris meeting to discuss personal data protection and taxes as France pushes for tougher European regulations. (AP Photo/Michel Euler, Pool)



Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella speaks during the opening of the VivaTech gadget show in Paris, Thursday, May 24, 2018. Macron took on Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg and other internet giants Wednesday at a Paris meeting to discuss personal data protection and taxes as France pushes for tougher European regulations. (AP Photo/Michel Euler, Pool)



French President Emmanuel Macron, left, stops at a connected bicycles stands at the VivaTech gadget show in Paris, Thursday, May 24, 2018. Macron took on Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg and other internet giants Wednesday at a Paris meeting to discuss personal data protection and taxes as France pushes for tougher European regulations. (AP Photo/Michel Euler, Pool)



French President Emmanuel Macron gestures as he speaks to participants at the VivaTech gadget show in Paris, Thursday, May 24, 2018. Macron took on Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg and other internet giants Wednesday at a Paris meeting to discuss personal data protection and taxes as France pushes for tougher European regulations. (AP Photo/Michel Euler, Pool)



French President Emmanuel Macron speaks to participants at the VivaTech gadget show in Paris, Thursday, May 24, 2018. Macron took on Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg and other internet giants Wednesday at a Paris meeting to discuss personal data protection and taxes as France pushes for tougher European regulations. (AP Photo/Michel Euler, Pool)

© 2018 The Associated Press. All rights reserved.

Citation: Macron wants to make France gateway to Europe for tech firms (2018, May 24) retrieved 19 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2018-05-macron-france-gateway-europe-tech.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.