

Schwarz Digits sets European standard for digital sovereignty

- **With European Sovereign Stack Standard, ES3, Schwarz Digits sets the European sovereignty standard for cloud solutions and IT services.**
- **The four-stage maturity model offers companies from industry and SMEs guidance when choosing sovereign IT services.**
- **Independent verification by BDO creates a reliable factual basis for the evaluation of IT services and software with regard to digital sovereignty.**

Neckarsulm, April 17, 2026 – Schwarz Digits, the IT and digital division of the Schwarz Group, is setting the standard for digital sovereignty in Europe. At this year's Hannover Messe (April 20–24), the company will present the European Sovereign Stack Standard, ES³, and exclusively showcase a trade fair exhibit. The ES³ creates a factual basis and transparency that is unique on the market. It provides orientation for decision-makers from industry and SMEs and supports companies in increasing their digital sovereignty. A sovereignty maturity model evaluates the digital sovereignty of IT services in four clear levels. The aim of the initiative is to objectively assess and compare the complexity and digital sovereignty of IT infrastructures. BDO has verified the sovereignty maturity model, which is subject to the ES³, as an independent third party.

"We are transforming the need for digital sovereignty into a measurable standard for industry companies, SMEs and regulated sectors. With the European Sovereign Stack Standard, we set the benchmark for a self-determined Europe in the digital age," emphasizes **Rolf Schumann, Co-CEO of Schwarz Digits**.

Four-Tier Roadmap to Digital Sovereignty of IT services

The ES³ is the core of a comprehensive sovereignty program: a pre-sales tool determines the sovereignty maturity level of a customer's IT services and solutions. Following this analysis, STACKIT, the cloud provider of Schwarz Digits, creates a recommendation for IT solutions that meet both the technical requirements and the need for digital sovereignty. The IT solutions from technology partners that are available via the STACKIT cloud are classified according to the sovereignty maturity model and offer immediate guidance for procurement.

The ES³ enables IT decision makers to do a systematic, risk-minimized decision on sovereign solutions. It contains four cumulative levels: Basic, Initial, Advanced and Future-Proof. The highest maturity level of the framework is classified as "future-proof" to underline the almost complete digital autonomy and the ability of users to keep their data and infrastructure under control.

Christian Müller, Co-CEO of Schwarz Digits, explains the technological depth: "True sovereignty requires full transparency across the entire tech stack. The standard creates a practice-oriented factual basis that is unique in the market to date. Those who rely on the

European Sovereign Stack Standard are opting for verified security without compromising on performance."

The verification of the sovereignty maturity model by BDO ensures that the ES³ is neutral, comprehensible and objective. This validation offers three decisive advantages: A resilient comparability of IT services, regulatory security and a low investment risk.

Parwáz Rafiqpoor, Chairman of the Management Board of BDO AG: "The audit of the sovereignty maturity model by BDO confirms: The ES³ maturity model provides an independent, practical basis for strengthening digital sovereignty in Europe, especially for sovereign, cloud-based data solutions. It creates a clear, regulatory-compliant basis for decision-making."

Industry standard based on the EU framework

The ES³ follows the structure, values and principles of the European Commission's Cloud Sovereignty Framework. In future, the sovereignty maturity model is intended to establish an industry standard for the EU that allows a practice-oriented assessment and greater depth of detail. Therefore, the "Sovereignty Maturity Level Framework" measures sovereignty using a differentiated catalog with more than 100 criteria and enables direct comparability across four levels.

Bernd Wagner, CSO of Schwarz Digits, sees the sovereignty standard as a decisive lever for cooperation: " With the ES³ we create a win-win situation: while customers receive exactly the solutions that fit their specific sovereignty needs, our partners get visibility in a fast growing market through sovereignty badges. Ultimately, our customers benefit from a constantly growing ecosystem of first-class partners whose services are verified according to sovereignty criteria."

At Hannover Messe 2026, Schwarz Digits positions itself as a technology partner for industry and SMEs alongside strong partners as SCHUNK and Cybus.

Press pictures

Please find pictures of the Hannover Messe 2026 attached.
We provide press pictures of the ES³ exhibit piece here from April 20.

More information

Please find detailed information on www.schwarz-digits.de/en

Press contact

Schwarz Digits
Telephone +49 7132 30-490490
presse@digits.schwarz

About Schwarz Digits

Schwarz Digits is the IT and digital division of Schwarz Group and offers impressive digital products and services that meet the high German data protection standards. With the aim of

achieving the greatest possible digital sovereignty, Schwarz Digits provides the IT infrastructure and solutions for the extensive ecosystem of Schwarz Group's companies and develops it for the future. Schwarz Digits' sovereign core services include Cloud, Cyber Security, Data and AI, Communication and Workspace. In addition, Schwarz Digits creates optimal conditions for the development of trend-setting innovations for end customers, companies and public sector organizations.

About BDO AG Wirtschaftsprüfungsgesellschaft

With over 3,250 employees in 28 offices, BDO is one of the leading companies in Germany for auditing and audit-related services, tax advice and business law advice. In the 2023/2024 reporting year, the German BDO Group achieved sales of 461 million euros - an increase of 14.2 percent.