Decision approving the Final Ranking List of Project Proposals eligible for funding under the *SECURE – Strengthening EU SMEs Cyber Resilience* Project First Open Call for Proposals. Delegation to Cyber 4.0 Association to execute the Sub-Grant Agreements in the name and on behalf of the National Cybersecurity Agency. Authorization for Cyber 4.0 Association to make payments to beneficiaries.

The Director General of the National Cybersecurity Agency,

Having regard to Decree-Law No. 82 of 14 June 2021, converted, with amendments, into Law No. 109 of 4 August 2021, laying down urgent provisions on cybersecurity, defining the national cybersecurity architecture and establishing the National Cybersecurity Agency (hereinafter, the "NCA", "ACN" or "the Agency"), and in particular Article 5(2), pursuant to which the Agency enjoys regulatory, administrative, asset-management, organizational, accounting and financial autonomy;

Having regard to Article 7(1)(t), first sentence, of the aforementioned Decree-Law No. 82 of 2021, pursuant to which the Agency promotes, supports and coordinates Italian participation in European Union and international projects and initiatives, including through the involvement of national public and private entities, in the field of cybersecurity and related application services;

Having regard also to Article 7(1)(aa) of the aforementioned Decree-Law No. 82 of 2021, under which the Agency is designated as the National Coordination Centre pursuant to Article 6 of Regulation (EU) 2021/887 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2021 establishing the European Cybersecurity Industrial, Technology and Research Competence Centre and the Network of National Coordination Centres;

Whereas Mr Andrea Quacivi was appointed Director General of the Agency by resolution of the Council of Ministers of 22 May 2026;

Having regard to Grant Agreement No. 101190325, registered under ACN Protocol No. 8034 of 21 January 2025, concluded between the European Cybersecurity Competence Centre, acting as the granting authority, the Agency, acting as coordinator, and NASK, INCIBE, CCB, LHC, Cyber 4.0 Association, ADR and PIA, acting as the other beneficiaries, concerning the EU project "*SECURE – Strengthening EU SMEs Cyber Resilience*", funded by the European Union under the Digital Europe Programme (*DIGITAL-ECCC-2024-DEPLOY-CYBER-06*, topic *STRENGTHENCRA*);

Having regard to the Consortium Agreement, registered under ACN Protocol No. 257218 of 23 June 2025, entered into between the Agency, acting as Coordinator, and the other beneficiaries of the aforementioned Grant Agreement, establishing the SECURE Consortium;

Having regard to the "*SECURE First Open Call for Proposals – Guidelines*", registered under ACN Protocol No. 20677 of 26 January 2026, concerning the aforementioned SECURE project and aimed at providing "*Financial support for mSMEs to co-finance activities, goods and services aimed at strengthening cyber resilience and achieving compliance with the Cyber Resilience Act*", with an

overall budget of EUR 5,000,000 and a maximum funding amount of EUR 30,000 per project, for which applications were accepted from 28 January 2026 to 29 March 2026;

Having regard to the appointment of the Evaluation Committee for the assessment of project proposals, decided by the SECURE Consortium General Assembly on 31 March 2026 and registered under ACN Protocol No. 126978 of 10 April 2026, as well as to the declarations of absence of conflicts of interest submitted individually by each evaluator and registered under ACN Protocol No. 293092 of 28 September 2026;

Having regard to the results of the formal eligibility assessment of project proposals carried out by Cyber 4.0 Association pursuant to the aforementioned Call, registered under ACN Protocol No. 293103 of 28 September 2026;

Having regard to the minutes concerning the meetings, internal organization and outcomes of the technical evaluation conducted by the Evaluation Committee, drawn up on 30 June 2026 and registered under ACN Protocol No. 331020 of 10 November 2026;

Whereas, in the event of a tie in the scores awarded to project proposals, the Call provides for the application of the criterion based on the chronological order of submission;

Having regard to the results of the eligibility assessment carried out, pursuant to the provisions of the Call, by the National Coordination Centres (NCCs) of the EU Member State in which the applicant is established ("*Declarations of Completion of Checks*"), registered under ACN Protocol Nos. 297697 of 2 October 2026 and 327800 of 5 November 2026, as well as to the assessment conducted by the Agency in its capacity as NCC-IT pursuant to Article 7(1)(aa) of the aforementioned Decree-Law No. 82 of 2021, registered under ACN Protocol No. 302817 of 7 October 2026 and subsequently revised in light of additional evidence, by determination registered under ACN Protocol No. 321132 of 28 October 2026;

Considering that the aforementioned Consortium Agreement provides that the Coordinator, following completion of the evaluations required for each Open Call, shall approve the cascade funding and, consequently, delegate Cyber 4.0 Association to execute the Sub-Grant Agreements with the beneficiaries in its name and on its behalf, while also authorizing it to make the related payments (page 23, section 7.2.3);

Having regard to the final ranking list of project proposals submitted under the aforementioned Call, registered under ACN Protocol No. 328650 of 6 November 2026, drawn up on the basis of the technical evaluation conducted by the Evaluation Committee and taking into account the above-mentioned eligibility assessments, consisting of: the list of admitted and fully fundable project proposals (Annex A), the list of project proposals admitted subject to conditions (Annex B), the list of eligible but non-fundable project proposals due to budget exhaustion (Annex C), and the list of ineligible and non-fundable project proposals (Annex D);

Considering therefore that the above-mentioned ranking list should be approved;

Considering that, with regard to the project proposals admitted subject to conditions (Annex B), additional documentation is required for the execution of the Sub-Grant Agreements, following confirmation by the Evaluation Committee, where applicable, that the required regularization has been completed;

Considering therefore that Cyber 4.0 Association should be delegated to execute, in the name and on behalf of the Agency, the Sub-Grant Agreements with the beneficiaries listed in Annex A and, subject to completion of the required regularization, with the beneficiaries listed in Annex B;

Considering also that Cyber 4.0 Association should be authorized to make payments to the beneficiary SMEs, subject to verification that all conditions required by law, the Call and the project documentation are satisfied;

Considering finally that this Decision should be published on the institutional website of the National Cybersecurity Agency (www.acn.gov.it) and on the SECURE project website (www.secure4sme.eu);

DECIDES

To approve the final ranking list of project proposals submitted under the SECURE First Open Call for Proposals, consisting of:

- the list of admitted and fully fundable project proposals (Annex A);
- the list of project proposals admitted subject to conditions (Annex B);
- the list of eligible but non-fundable project proposals due to budget exhaustion (Annex C);
- the list of non-eligible and non-fundable project proposals (Annex D).

To delegate Cyber 4.0 Association to execute, in the name and on behalf of the Agency, the Sub-Grant Agreements with the beneficiaries listed in Annex A and, subject to completion of the required regularization process, with the beneficiaries listed in Annex B.

To authorize Cyber 4.0 Association to make payments to beneficiaries, subject to verification that the conditions established by law and by the Call are fulfilled.

This Decision shall be published on the official website of the National Cybersecurity Agency (www.acn.gov.it) and on the SECURE project website (www.secure4sme.eu).