

Promotion of internet connectivity in local communities

2016/0287(COD) - 12/09/2017 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 582 votes to 98, with 9 abstentions, a legislative resolution on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulations (EU) No 1316/2013 and (EU) No 283/2014 as regards the promotion of Internet connectivity in local communities.

The European Parliament's position adopted at first reading following the ordinary legislative procedure amended the Commission proposal as follows:

Aim: the aim of the Regulation is to support the provision of **high-quality wireless connectivity in local communities across the Union** in order to reduce the digital divide in rural and isolated areas.

The amended text stressed the importance of broadband deployment in the EU. It reaffirmed the goal of ensuring that, **by 2020, all Europeans have access to internet speeds of above 30 Mbps** and 50 % or more of European households subscribe to internet connections above 100 Mbps.

Eligibility and conditions: in order to be eligible for funding, actions shall:

- be implemented by a **public sector body which is capable of planning and supervising the installation, as well as ensuring for a minimum of three years the financing of operating costs**, of indoor or outdoor local wireless access points in public spaces;
- use the **latest and best-performing equipment** capable of providing their users with a broadband connection that is easy to access and properly secured, free of charge and without discriminatory conditions;
- provide access to services at least in the relevant **languages** of the Member State concerned and, to the extent possible, in other official languages of the institutions of the Union;
- respect the principles of technological neutrality;
- commit to providing equipment or services to ensure that projects do not unduly distort competition.

In addition, internet connectivity shall:

- be provided **without corresponding remuneration**, whether by direct payment or by other types of consideration, such as commercial advertising or the provision of personal data for commercial purpose;
- ensure a **smooth functioning of the network** and, in particular, the need to ensure a fair allocation of capacity between users at peak times.

Actions **duplicating** existing free private or public offers with similar characteristics in the same public space shall not be eligible to receive funding.

Budget: the available budget shall be allocated in a **geographically balanced manner across Member States** and, in principle, on a 'first come, first served' basis. Administrative procedures shall be **simplified** so that decisions can be taken in a timely manner.

To provide appropriate financing for the promotion of internet connectivity in local communities and to ensure its successful implementation, the financial envelope for the implementation of the [Connecting Europe Facility](#) in the telecommunications sector should be increased by EUR 25 million, and may be increased to **EUR 50 million**.

Actions financed shall be in operation and closely monitored by the Commission for at least three years. The Commission shall inform end-users about the availability of services and draw attention to the fact that funding has been provided by the Union.