

Promotion of internet connectivity in local communities

2016/0287(COD) - 25/10/2017 - Final act

PURPOSE: to support the provision of high quality wireless connectivity in local communities throughout the Union.

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Regulation (EU) 2017/1953 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.

CONTENT: this Regulation amends [Regulation \(EU\) No 1316/2013](#) on the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) and [Regulation \(EU\) No 283/2014](#) on guidelines for trans-European networks in the area of telecommunications infrastructure.

The amendments shall enable the Union to provide assistance to **support access to high-quality free local wireless connectivity without discriminatory conditions** in centres of public life (e.g. public administrations, libraries, hospitals, etc.) and outdoor public spaces).

The promotion of local wireless connectivity that is free of charge and without discriminatory conditions in centres of public life should be identified as a **distinct project of common interest** in the telecommunications sector within the meaning of Regulations (EU) No 1316/2013 and (EU) No 283/2014.

The Regulation aims to contribute to **bridging the digital divide**, particularly in rural and remote areas. It underlines the importance of broadband deployment in the Union and reaffirms 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: under the Regulation, municipalities, hospitals and **other public sector bodies** may apply for funding for the installation of new wireless access points if there are no private or similar public internet access available.

The public body will have to commit to **maintaining the new connection for at least three years**.

Actions financed shall:

- **use the latest and best performing equipment** capable of providing a high-speed connection that is easily accessible 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 purposes;

- ensure the smooth functioning of the network and, in particular, fair allocation of capacity between users at peak times.

Financing: the available budget should be allocated in a geographically balanced manner across Member States to projects and, in principle, on a ‘first come, first served’ basis. EU funding will cover up to **100% of eligible costs**.

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 carried out and monitored closely by the Commission for at least three years.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: 4.11.2017.