

Measures to reduce the cost of deploying gigabit electronic communications networks

2023/0046(COD) - 25/09/2023 - Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading

The Committee on Industry, Research and Energy adopted the report by Alin MITUA (Renew, RO) on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on measures to reduce the cost of deploying gigabit electronic communications networks and repealing Directive 2014/61/EU (Gigabit Infrastructure Act).

The committee responsible recommended that the European Parliament's position adopted at first reading under the ordinary legislative procedure should amend the proposal as follows:

Expanded access to physical infrastructure

To bridge the digital coverage gap between rural and urban areas, the report proposed, in limited conditions, to expand the obligation to facilitate access to physical public infrastructures to privately owned commercial buildings. This expansion aims to provide coverage in rural, remote, or scarcely populated areas where no public building or infrastructure can offer a satisfactory alternative.

Member States could **shorten the deadlines** to grant or deny permits necessary for deployment, introduce **supplementary permit exemptions**, extend provisions on civil works coordination also to privately funded projects, require that more information on physical infrastructure or planned civil works is provided to a single information point in electronic format, expand the provisions on access to existing physical infrastructure to privately owned buildings, as well as introduce further incentives for administrative bodies to **speed up permitting procedures**, give guidance on methodologies for access price setting, including through the use of cost-oriented principle where appropriate, provided that they do not violate Union law including the provisions of this Regulation.

Joint coordination and single information points

To reduce the administrative burden and ensure shorter timeframes for the permit-granting procedure, where multiple competent authorities are involved in the granting of a number of different permits and rights of way associated to one request, Member States should assign a **single coordination body**. That body should be tasked to facilitate the coordination between the various competent authorities involved, through different mechanisms, including through joint coordination procedures such as **on-site visits**. The information on the procedures and general conditions applicable to granting permits for civil works and rights of way should be made available via **single information points** by each competent authority involved.

In addition, the report called for ensure adequate technical, financial and human resources to support the roll-out and the digitalisation of single information points. The cost of setting-up the single national digital entry point, single information points and related digital tools needed may be fully or partly eligible for financial support under Union funds.

Report and monitoring

Three years following the entry into force, the Commission should present a report to the European Parliament and the Council on the implementation of this Regulation which should take into consideration the use of satellite backhauling in digital highspeed connectivity and the use of the European Infrastructure for Resilience, Interconnectivity and Security by Satellite.

Abolition of retail surcharges for regulated intra-EU communications

To protect citizens from excessive prices, retail charges for intra-EU calls are currently capped. These caps are set to expire in May 2024. The amended text stated that providers of electronic communications to the public should not apply tariffs to regulated intra-EU communications terminating in another Member State that are higher than the tariffs applicable to services terminating in the same Member State, unless they demonstrate the existence of direct costs that are objectively justified. This change would not only foster intra-EU communications and exchanges but would also allow us to create a true single market for digital and telecommunication services in the EU.