

Union Secure Connectivity Programme 2023-2027

2022/0039(COD) - 13/10/2022 - Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading

The Committee on Industry, Research and Energy adopted the report by Christophe GRUDLER (Renew Europe, FR) on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Union Secure Connectivity Programme for the period 2023-2027.

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:

Programme objectives

Members proposed to clarify the general objective of the Programme. It aims to establish a secure, autonomous and multi-services space-based system under civil control, integrating and complementing the capacities of the GOVSATCOM component of the Union Space Programme.

The Programme's specific objectives have also been expanded. They aim to:

- improve the quality, resilience and autonomy of the Union and Member States' satellite services;
- increase the cyber resilience of the Union by developing redundancy, passive and reactive cyber protection and operational cybersecurity;
- develop and integrate the space and related ground segment of the EuroQCI to enable secure transmission of cryptographic keys;
- enable, where possible, the development of communication and other services, by improving, creating synergies between and expanding capabilities and services of components of the Union Space Programme, as well as services that are not components of the Union Space Programme, by hosting additional satellite subsystems, including payloads;
- further develop broadband and seamless connectivity across the Union, thus eliminating communication dead zones while bridging the digital divide and enabling affordable access to the Internet;
- to improve the Union's strategical and technological autonomy in terms of space technologies, assets, operations and services.

Implementation activities of the Programme

Members proposed that the provision of the governmental services should be based on, integrated into and complemented by the **GOVSATCOM** component of the Union Space Programme. They should be ensured through the following activities:

- by **2024**, the design, development, validation and related deployment activities of the space and ground infrastructure required to provide first governmental services 6 months after the deployment;
- development and gradual integration of the space and related ground segment of the European Quantum Communication Infrastructure into the space and ground infrastructure of the secure connectivity system;

- deployment activities to complete the space and ground infrastructure required to provide governmental services, leading to full operational capability by **2027**.

Environmental and space sustainability

According to Members, the implementation of the Programme should be carried out with a view to ensuring the environmental and space sustainability. To ensure environmental and space sustainability, the contracts and procedures should include provisions on:

- the **minimisation of greenhouse gas emissions** generated by the development, production and deployment of the infrastructure;
- the establishment of a scheme to **offset** the remaining greenhouse gas emissions;
- appropriate measures to reduce visible and invisible radiation pollution caused by the spacecraft, and that can hamper astronomical observations or any other type of research and observations;
- the use of appropriate **collision-avoidance technologies** for spacecraft;
- the submission and implementation of a comprehensive **debris mitigation plan** before the deployment phase.

The committee proposed that the Commission should ensure that a comprehensive **database** of the Programme's space assets, in particular with data relating to environmental and space sustainability aspects, is maintained.

Budget

The report noted that the financial envelope for the implementation of the Programme for the period from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2027 and for covering the associated risks relating to the governmental infrastructure only shall be EUR 1.750 billion in current prices.

That amount should be drawn from the unallocated margins under the MFF 2021-2027 ceilings or mobilised through the non-thematic MFF special instruments.

The Programme should be complemented by funding implemented by relevant activities under the Horizon Europe Programme and the GOVSATCOM component of the Union Space Programme for a maximum indicative amount of EUR 0.430 billion and EUR 0.220 billion respectively.

Principles of procurement

The report lays down specific measures concerning public contracts to **encourage new entrants, SMEs and start-ups** across the EU and their cross-border participation, and to offer the widest possible geographical coverage while protecting the EU's strategic autonomy.

For contracts above EUR 10 million, the contracting authority should ensure that large portions and at least 30% of the value of the contract is subcontracted by competitive tendering at various levels of subcontracting to companies outside the group of the prime tenderer, particularly in order to enable the cross-border participation of SMEs in the space ecosystem.

Evaluation and review

By 2 years after the entry into force of the Regulation and in any event by the 30 June 2026, and every two years thereafter, the Commission should evaluate the implementation of the Programme.