

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 Parliaments 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.