

EN  
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Answer given by Ms Bieńkowska  
on behalf of the European Commission  
(10.4.2019)

The Commission acknowledges the importance of connectivity in the perspective of the European Gigabit Society and reaffirms the synergies of this pilot project with the Space Strategy's<sup>1</sup> objective to maximise the benefits of space for society and the EU economy and the complementarities with other EU initiatives such as Rural Broadband action plan<sup>2</sup>.

Digital education is gaining ground but without broadband access in schools its vast potential is left unexplored. Schools in digital divide areas, not covered by fixed or mobile broadband, are especially disadvantaged as broadband access is key to get access to high-quality online educational content.

The Commission intends to implement this pilot project by means of a grant following a call for proposals toward stakeholders deeply involved in digital divide reduction such as public authorities, educational institutions or governmental and non-governmental organisations. The action will be implemented by the Research Executive Agency (direct management).

The project will look at both service supply-side and demand-side, the deployment of few field experiments and associated feedbacks.

The Commission confirms that the envelope reserved for the pilot project is EUR 980 000.

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<sup>1</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - Space Strategy for Europe; COM(2016) 705 final.

<sup>2</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Connectivity for a Competitive Digital Single Market - Towards a European Gigabit Society - COM(2016) 587.