



25.1.2017

# **DRAFT OPINION**

of the Committee on Budgets

for the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy

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 (COM(2016)0589 – C8-0378/2016 – 2016/0287(COD))

Rapporteur: Liadh Ní Riada



## AMENDMENTS

The Committee on Budgets calls on the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, as the committee responsible, to take into account the following amendments:

### Amendment 1

#### Proposal for a regulation

##### Recital 4

###### *Text proposed by the Commission*

(4) Support of this kind should encourage entities with a public mission such as public authorities and providers of public services to offer free local wireless connectivity as an ancillary service to their public mission so as to ensure that local communities can experience the benefits of very high-speed broadband in the centres of public life. Such entities could include municipalities and other local public authorities, libraries and hospitals.

###### *Amendment*

(4) Support of this kind should encourage entities with a public mission such as public authorities, ***cooperatives, community-based social enterprises*** and providers of public services, to offer free local wireless connectivity as an ancillary service to their public mission so as to ensure that local communities can experience the benefits of very high-speed broadband in the centres of public life. Such entities could include municipalities and other local public authorities, libraries and hospitals.

Or. en

###### *Justification*

*Cooperatives and community-based social enterprises should be included in this programme, especially with regard to the importance in local communities.*

### Amendment 2

#### Proposal for a regulation

##### Recital 7

###### *Text proposed by the Commission*

(7) To provide this intervention with appropriate financing, ***the*** financial envelope ***for the implementation of*** the CEF in the telecommunications sector should be ***increased by*** an amount of EUR ***50 000 000***.

###### *Amendment*

(7) To provide this intervention with appropriate financing, ***a dedicated*** financial envelope ***within*** the CEF in the telecommunications sector should be ***created and endowed with*** an amount of EUR ***120 000 000 per principle, over and above the MFF ceiling, from unallocated margins, by mobilising the flexibility***

*instrument and exceptionally by recurring to redeployment.*

Or. en

*Justification*

*CEF has already suffered large cuts due to the setting-up of EFSI. This programme had not been planned at the time of adoption of the current MFF. The new programme should thus per principle be fully financed over and above the EU BUDG. Bearing in mind the urgency, merits and modest amounts required for its implementation we consider that funding from unallocated margins, as well as the annual possibility of mobilising the flexibility instrument should be primarily considered, only recurring to redeployment as a last resort instrument.*

**Amendment 3**

**Proposal for a regulation**  
**Recital 8 a (new)**

*Text proposed by the Commission*

*Amendment*

***(8 a) The Commission should ensure that public authorities', cooperatives, community-based social enterprises, providers of public services and the final beneficiaries, i.e. the local communities and users of this free wifi-service, are duly and promptly informed of the existence of this programme and support, so as to enhance the visibility to the Union financing granted.***

Or. en

*Justification*

*EU programmes and the financial support granted should be promoted by the Commission near the public authorities, understood latu sensu and the final beneficiaries should be informed.*

**Amendment 4**

**Proposal for a regulation**  
**Recital 10**

*Text proposed by the Commission*

*Amendment*

(10) To ensure that connectivity in

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accordance with this Regulation is provided quickly, financial assistance should be implemented using to the fullest extent possible on-line tools that allow for the swift submission and handling of applications and support the implementation, monitoring and auditing of the local wireless access points installed.

accordance with this Regulation is provided quickly, financial assistance should be implemented using to the fullest extent possible **both** on-line **and other conventional** tools that allow for the swift submission and handling of applications and support the implementation, monitoring and auditing of the local wireless access points installed.

Or. en

#### *Justification*

*This programme is meant to close digital gaps; limiting the application procedure to on-line tools is discriminative when it should indeed be complementary and might impair the programme's aims.*

### **Amendment 5**

#### **Proposal for a regulation**

##### **Recital 11**

###### *Text proposed by the Commission*

(11) Given Internet connectivity needs within the Union and the urgency of promoting access networks that can deliver, throughout the EU, an Internet experience of high quality based on very high-speed broadband services, financial assistance should seek to attain a geographically balanced distribution.

###### *Amendment*

(11) Given Internet connectivity needs within the Union and the urgency of promoting access networks that can deliver, throughout the EU, an Internet experience of high quality based on very high-speed broadband services, ***synergies with other Union, national and regional funds and programmes should be taken into account, in particular when providing additional*** financial assistance ***as it should also target less-developed and transition regions and*** seek to attain a geographically balanced distribution.

Or. en

#### *Justification*

*The aim of this programme should be to bridge the geographical digital divide while boosting digital access to the public.*

## Amendment 6

### Proposal for a regulation

#### Recital 12 a (new)

*Text proposed by the Commission*

*Amendment*

***(12 a) It should be ensured that no commercial use is made of the infrastructures created following the phasing out of financial assistance at the end of the financing period.***

Or. en

*Justification*

*The benefit of this programme is to guarantee to the public a free of charge service, therefore a commercial use of the infrastructure financed by EU-funds should be limited and in no case should it represent an added burden to the final beneficiary.*

## Amendment 7

### Proposal for a regulation

#### Article 1 – paragraph 1 – point 1

Regulation (EU) No 1316/2013

Article 5 – paragraph 1 – subparagraph 1 – point b

*Text proposed by the Commission*

*Amendment*

(b) telecommunications sector: EUR  
***1 091 602 000;***

(b) telecommunications sector: EUR  
***1 161 602 000;***

Or. en

*Justification*

*CEF has already suffered large cuts due to the setting-up of EFSI. This programme falls into its remit, it had not been planned at the time of adoption of the current MFF. The new programme should per principle be fully financed over and above the EU BUDG. Bearing in mind the urgency, merits and modest amounts required for its implementation we consider that funding from unallocated margins, as well as the annual possibility of mobilising the flexibility instrument should be primarily considered, only recurring to redeployment as a last resort instrument.*

## Amendment 8

### Proposal for a regulation

#### Article 2 – paragraph 1 – point 6

Regulation (EU) No 283/2014

Annex – Section 4 – paragraph 2

*Text proposed by the Commission*

Financial assistance shall be available to entities with a public mission such as local authorities and providers of public services undertaking to provide free local wireless connectivity through the installation of local wireless access points.

*Amendment*

Financial assistance shall be available to entities with a public mission such as local authorities, ***cooperatives, community-based social enterprises*** and providers of public services, undertaking to provide free local wireless connectivity through the installation of local wireless access points.

Or. en

*Justification*

*Cooperatives and community-based social enterprises should be included in this programme as they are, per nature providers of public services while developing an important role in local communities.*

## Amendment 9

### Proposal for a regulation

#### Article 2 – paragraph 1 – point 6

Regulation (EU) No 283/2014

Annex – Section 4 – paragraph 3 – point 2 a (new)

*Text proposed by the Commission*

*Amendment*

***2 a) Contribute to bridging the digital gap and to improving digital literacy;***

Or. en

*Justification*

*The aim of this programme should be to bridge the geographical digital divide and it should contribute to boost digital literacy.*

## Amendment 10

### Proposal for a regulation

#### Article 2 – paragraph 1 – point 6

*Text proposed by the Commission*

The available budget shall be allocated in a geographically balanced manner to projects meeting the above conditions in view of the proposals received ***and, in principle, on a 'first come, first served' basis.***

*Amendment*

The available budget shall be allocated in a geographically balanced manner to projects meeting the above conditions in view of the proposals received, ***while ensuring integration of less-developed and transition regions.***

Or. en

*Justification*

*The aim of this programme should be to bridge the geographical digital divide.*