



Plenary sitting

A8-0181/2017

4.5.2017

*****I**
REPORT

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))

Committee on Industry, Research and Energy

Rapporteur: Carlos Zorrinho

Symbols for procedures

- * Consultation procedure
- *** Consent procedure
- ***I Ordinary legislative procedure (first reading)
- ***II Ordinary legislative procedure (second reading)
- ***III Ordinary legislative procedure (third reading)

(The type of procedure depends on the legal basis proposed by the draft act.)

Amendments to a draft act

Amendments by Parliament set out in two columns

Deletions are indicated in ***bold italics*** in the left-hand column. Replacements are indicated in ***bold italics*** in both columns. New text is indicated in ***bold italics*** in the right-hand column.

The first and second lines of the header of each amendment identify the relevant part of the draft act under consideration. If an amendment pertains to an existing act that the draft act is seeking to amend, the amendment heading includes a third line identifying the existing act and a fourth line identifying the provision in that act that Parliament wishes to amend.

Amendments by Parliament in the form of a consolidated text

New text is highlighted in ***bold italics***. Deletions are indicated using either the **■** symbol or ~~strikeout~~. Replacements are indicated by highlighting the new text in ***bold italics*** and by deleting or striking out the text that has been replaced. By way of exception, purely technical changes made by the drafting departments in preparing the final text are not highlighted.

CONTENTS

	Page
DRAFT EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION.....	5
EXPLANATORY STATEMENT.....	21
ANNEX: LIST OF ENTITIES OR PERSONS FROM WHOM THE RAPPORTEUR HAS RECEIVED INPUT	23
OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON BUDGETS.....	24
OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT AND TOURISM.....	36
OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT	52
PROCEDURE – COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE.....	69

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

(Ordinary legislative procedure: first reading)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission proposal to Parliament and the Council (COM(2016)0589),
 - having regard to Article 294(2) and Article 172 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, pursuant to which the Commission submitted the proposal to Parliament (C8-0378/2016),
 - having regard to Article 294(3) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
 - having regard to the reasoned opinion submitted, within the framework of Protocol No 2 on the application of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, by the Swedish Parliament, asserting that the draft legislative act does not comply with the principle of subsidiarity,
 - having regard to the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee of 26 January 2017¹,
 - having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions of 00/00/00²,
 - having regard to Rule 59 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy and the opinions of the Committee on Budgets, the Committee on Transport and Tourism and the Committee on Regional Development (A8-0181/2017),
1. Adopts its position at first reading hereinafter set out;
 2. Calls on the Commission to refer the matter to Parliament again if it replaces, substantially amends or intends to substantially amend its proposal;
 3. Instructs its President to forward its position to the Council, the Commission and the national parliaments.

¹ OJ C 125, 21.4.2017, p. 69.

² OJ C, p..

Amendment 1

Proposal for a regulation

Recital 1

Text proposed by the Commission

(1) The Commission Communication setting out a European vision of Internet connectivity for citizens and business in the Digital Single Market¹⁴ describes a number of possible measures capable of enhancing connectivity in the European Union.

¹⁴ *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).*

Amendment 2

Proposal for a regulation

Recital 1 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(1) The Commission Communication *of 14 September 2016 entitled “Connectivity for a Competitive Digital Single Market – Towards a European Gigabit Society”*, setting out a European vision of Internet connectivity for citizens, *public institutions* and business in the Digital Single Market, describes a number of possible measures capable of enhancing connectivity in the European Union.

(1a) In its Communication of 26 August 2010 entitled “A Digital Agenda for Europe”, the Commission recalls that the Europe 2020 Strategy underlined the importance of broadband deployment to promote social inclusion and competitiveness in the Union, reaffirming the goal of ensuring that, by 2020, all Union citizens have access to much higher internet speeds of above 30 Mbps and 50 % or more Union households subscribe to internet connections above 100 Mbps.

Amendment 3

Proposal for a regulation Recital 2

Text proposed by the Commission

(2) Amongst measures to support the vision of European connectivity, it promotes the deployment of local wireless access points through simplified planning procedures and reduced regulatory obstacles. Such access points, including those ancillary to the provision of other public services or non-commercial in character, can make an important contribution to the improvement of current **and** the deployment of **future generations of wireless communications** networks by facilitating more granular coverage in line with evolving needs.

Amendment

(2) Amongst measures to support the vision of European connectivity, it promotes the deployment of local wireless access points through simplified planning procedures and reduced regulatory obstacles. Such access points, including those ancillary to the provision of other public services or non-commercial in character, can make an important contribution to the improvement of current **wireless communications networks but should, in particular, contribute to** the deployment of future generations of **such** networks by facilitating more granular coverage in line with evolving needs. **Those access points should be able to form part of a network with a single authentication system that is valid across the whole Union, and other free local wireless connectivity networks should be able to join the system. The system should be in line with Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council^{1a} and Regulation (EU) 2015/2120 of the European Parliament and of the Council^{1b}, and the use of data for commercial advertisement or other commercial uses should not be permitted.**

^{1a} **Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation) (OJ L 119, 4.5.2016, p. 1).**

^{1b} **Regulation (EU) 2015/2120 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2015 laying down measures concerning open internet access and amending Directive 2002/22/EC on universal service and users' rights relating to electronic communications networks and**

services and Regulation (EU) No 531/2012 on roaming on public mobile communications networks within the Union (OJ L 310, 26.11.2015, p. 1).

Amendment 4

Proposal for a regulation Recital 2 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(2a) In the context of this Regulation, local wireless connectivity that is free of charge and free from restrictions means it is provided without corresponding remuneration, whether by direct payment or other types of consideration, including, but not limited to, commercial advertising and the provision of personal data for commercial purposes, and, without prejudice to restrictions required under Union law or under national law in compliance with Union law, as well as the need to ensure a smooth functioning of the network and in particular the need to ensure a fair allocation of capacity between users at peak-times, free from restrictions where there is no limitation in the period of time a user can be connected or restrictions in the user speed or volume.

Amendment 5

Proposal for a regulation Recital 2 b (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(2b) A competitive market and a future-proof legislative framework, which provides incentives for innovation, trans-European networks and structures, and new business models are the main driver for investments in very high capacity networks that can deliver connectivity to citizens throughout the Union.

Amendment 6

Proposal for a regulation

Recital 3

Text proposed by the Commission

(3) Following the Communication *setting out a European vision of Internet connectivity for the Digital Single Market* and in order to promote digital inclusion, the Union should support the provision of *free* local wireless connectivity in the centres of local public life, including outdoor spaces accessible to the general public, through targeted support. Such support is so far not covered by *Regulations* (EU) No 1316/2013¹⁵ *and* (EU) No 283/2014¹⁶.

¹⁵ Regulations (EU) No 1316/20136 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing the Connecting Europe Facility, amending Regulation (EU) No 913/2010 and repealing Regulations (EC) No 680/2007 and (EC) No 67/2010, OJ L 348, 20.12.2013, p. 129, as last amended by Regulation (EU) 2015/1017 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 June 2015, OJ L 169, 1.7.2015, p. 1.

¹⁶ Regulation (EU) No 283/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 on guidelines for trans-European networks in the area of telecommunications infrastructure and repealing Decision No 1336/97/EC, OJ L 86, 21.3.2014, p. 14.

Amendment 7

Proposal for a regulation

Recital 4

Text proposed by the Commission

(4) Support of this kind should

Amendment

(3) Following the *Commission* Communication of *14 September 2016* and in order to promote digital inclusion *and prevent remote locations and rural areas from lagging behind*, the Union should support the provision of *high-quality* local wireless connectivity *that is free of charge and free from restrictions* in the centres of local public life, including outdoor spaces accessible to the general public, through targeted support. Such support is so far not covered by *Regulation* (EU) No 1316/2013¹⁵ *or* (EU) No 283/2014¹⁶.

¹⁵ Regulations (EU) No 1316/20136 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing the Connecting Europe Facility, amending Regulation (EU) No 913/2010 and repealing Regulations (EC) No 680/2007 and (EC) No 67/2010, OJ L 348, 20.12.2013, p. 129, as last amended by Regulation (EU) 2015/1017 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 June 2015, OJ L 169, 1.7.2015, p. 1.

¹⁶ Regulation (EU) No 283/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 on guidelines for trans-European networks in the area of telecommunications infrastructure and repealing Decision No 1336/97/EC, OJ L 86, 21.3.2014, p. 14.

(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**.

encourage entities with a public mission such as public **sector bodies** and providers of public services to offer local wireless connectivity **that is free of charge and free from restrictions** as an ancillary service to their public mission so as to ensure that **people in the** local communities can **improve their digital skills and** experience the benefits of very high-speed broadband in the centres of public life. Such entities could include municipalities, **grouping of municipalities, companies with a public service mission owned by municipalities, not-for-profit co-operatives, community centres** and other local public authorities **and institutions**.

(In order to ensure that the wording proposed by Parliament is consistent across all languages, the terms used to translate the Portuguese expression 'gratuita e livre de restrições' should correspond to the English expression 'free of charge and free from restrictions'.)

Amendment 8

Proposal for a regulation Recital 4 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(4a) Free local wireless connectivity should contribute, inter alia, to better territorial and social cohesion, especially in places with limited access to internet.

Amendment 9

Proposal for a regulation Recital 5 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(5a) Improving access to fast and ultra-fast broadband and information and communications technology services, especially in remote areas, could increase the quality of peoples' life by facilitating access to services (e.g. e-Health and e-Government) and promote the development of local small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The authorities should therefore

ensure that nobody is left behind and that the internet content and online services are accessible to all.

Amendment 10

Proposal for a regulation Recital 5 b (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(5b) To guarantee the success of this Regulation and to give prominence to Union action in this area, the Commission must ensure that the entities pursuing projects pursuant to this Regulation provide end users with as much information as possible on the availability of the services and make prominent the fact that the Union has granted financing.

Amendment 11

Proposal for a regulation Recital 5 c (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(5c) The values and benefits of the Union should be promoted by way of an explanatory document setting out the purpose of the free local wireless connection service.

Amendment 12

Proposal for a regulation Recital 6 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(6a) Rural coverage of the new access networks is still significantly lower than urban coverage and only 28 % of rural homes are covered by fixed technology.

Amendment 13

Proposal for a regulation

Recital 7 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(7a) Delivering 5G by 2020 should be the main priority for the Digital Single Market, given its decisiveness for the global competitiveness, growth, innovation and research potential of the Union. Union funds need to be used effectively and appropriately in order to deliver on key issues.

Amendment 14

Proposal for a regulation

Recital 8

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(8) Given the non-commercial nature of this intervention and the small scale of individual projects foreseen, the administrative burden should be limited to a minimum. Therefore, the intervention should be implemented by the most appropriate forms of financial assistance, notably grants, available under the Financial Regulation, now or in future. The intervention should not rely on financial instruments.

(8) Given the non-commercial nature of this intervention and the small scale of individual projects foreseen, the administrative burden should be limited to a minimum ***and should be proportionate to the benefits envisaged, taking into account the need for accountability and a proper balance between simplification and control.*** Therefore, the intervention should be implemented by the most appropriate forms of financial assistance, notably grants, ***for instance through vouchers,*** available under the Financial Regulation, now or in future. The intervention should not rely on financial instruments. ***The principle of sound financial management should apply.***

Amendment 15

Proposal for a regulation

Recital 8 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(8a) Given the limited volume of

financial appropriations measured against the possibly high number of applications, steps should be taken to ensure that administrative procedures are simplified so that decisions can be taken in a timely manner. Regulation (EU) No 1316/2013 should be amended to allow Member States to support categories of proposals in line with the criteria defined in Section 4 of the Annex to Regulation (EU) No 283/2014, so as to avoid the individual approval of applications and ensure that certification of expenditure and annual reporting to the Commission are not obligatory for grants awarded under this Regulation.

Amendment 16

Proposal for a regulation Recital 9

Text proposed by the Commission

(9) Due to the limited reach of any single local wireless access point and the small value of individual projects covered, access points benefitting from financial assistance under this Regulation are not expected to challenge commercial offers. In order to further ensure that such financial assistance does not unduly distort competition, crowd out private investments or create disincentives for private operators to invest, the intervention should be limited to projects that do not duplicate already existing private or public offers of similar characteristics in the same area. This should not exclude additional support to deployments under this initiative from public or private sources of funding.

Amendment

(9) Due to the limited reach of any single local wireless access point and the small value of individual projects covered, access points benefitting from financial assistance under this Regulation are not expected to challenge commercial offers. In order to further ensure that such financial assistance does not unduly distort competition, crowd out private investments or create disincentives for private operators to invest, the intervention should be limited to projects that do not duplicate already existing *free* private or public offers of similar characteristics in the same area. This should not exclude additional support to deployments under this initiative from public or private sources of funding, *as such a blending could contribute to a more significant effect, which should lead to incentives for private investments and leverage of the internet connection to a wider audience. In this regard, it is necessary to ensure synergies with other national or Union funds, including the European Regional Development Fund, in order to achieve maximum impact not only in terms of accessibility for citizens but also*

of social cohesion and helping to combat the digital divide in less developed regions.

Amendment 17

Proposal for a regulation

Recital 9 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(9a) The available budget should be allocated in a geographically balanced manner so that projects can be covered in all the Member States. The allocation should also take into account the need to address the digital divide. Those principles, the aim of which is to guarantee geographical balance and an inclusive society, should be included in the relevant work programmes adopted in accordance with the Regulation (EU) No 1316/2013 and this Regulation, be specified in the calls for projects and, if necessary, should allow increased participation for applicants from Member States where participation has been relatively low and focused on areas determined by the Member States or the Commission as lagging behind in connectivity or digital literacy.

Amendment 18

Proposal for a regulation

Recital 9 b (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(9b) Giving local SMEs priority in the context of the procurement and installation of equipment with a view to the provision of local wireless connectivity in accordance with this Regulation could safeguard the potential for innovation and creation of quality jobs in municipalities.

Amendment 19

Proposal for a regulation Recital 10

Text proposed by the Commission

(10) To ensure that connectivity in 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.

Amendment

(10) To ensure that connectivity in 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. ***It is important that the Commission inform local authorities about the planned action and the relevant conditions as early as possible in order to allow them to make preparations and apply for calls for proposals when they are issued. The Commission and the relevant authorities in the Member States should also do their utmost to create the necessary awareness of the programme.***

Amendment 20

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 high-speed broadband services, ***in support of the objectives of the European gigabit society***, financial assistance should seek to attain a geographically balanced distribution ***and reduce the digital divide, promoting access for citizens to the benefits of the information society and supporting areas with relatively low levels of high-speed broadband connectivity.***

Amendment 21

Proposal for a regulation Recital 11 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(11a) Furthermore, beneficiaries should be required to provide free local wireless connectivity for not less than three years.

Amendment 22

Proposal for a regulation Recital 11 b (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(11b) The actions financed pursuant to this Regulation should be viable and sustainable in the long term. Such viability and sustainability should be achieved by providing technical tools to ensure their long-term efficiency by the use of technology that is kept up to date and safe for the users by the beneficiaries and the services providers.

Amendment 23

Proposal for a regulation Article 1 – paragraph 1 – point 2 – point b Regulation (EU) No 1316/2013 Article 7 – paragraph 4 – point c

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(c) actions in the field of providing **free** local wireless connectivity in local communities shall be financed through grants or forms of financial assistance other than financial instruments.

(c) actions in the field of providing local wireless connectivity **that is free of charge and free from restrictions** in local communities shall be financed through grants or forms of financial assistance other than financial instruments.

(This amendment applies throughout the text. Adopting it will necessitate corresponding changes throughout.)

Amendment 24

Proposal for a regulation

Article 1 – paragraph 1 – point 4 a (new)

Regulation (EU) No 1316/2013

Article 22 – paragraph 3 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

4a. *In Article 22, the following paragraph is added:*

'The certification of expenditure and provision of annual information to the Commission, referred to, respectively, in the second and third paragraphs of this Article shall not be mandatory for grants awarded pursuant to point (c) of Article 4(1) of Regulation (EU) No 283/2014.'*

** Regulation (EU) No 283/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 on guidelines for trans-European networks in the area of telecommunications infrastructure and repealing Decision No 1336/97/EC (OJ L 86, 21.3.2014, p. 14).*

Amendment 25

Proposal for a regulation

Article 2 – paragraph 1 – point 1

Regulation (EU) No 283/2014

Article 2 – paragraph 2 – point h

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(h) 'local wireless access point' means a low power equipment of small size operating within a small range, using on a non-exclusive basis radio spectrum for which the conditions of availability and efficient use for this purpose are harmonised at Union level, and which allows wireless access by users to an electronic communications network.

(h) 'local wireless access point' means a low power equipment of small size operating within a small range **but with high bandwidth**, using on a non-exclusive basis radio, **infrared or visible light** spectrum for which the conditions of availability and efficient use for this purpose are harmonised at Union level, and which allows wireless access by users to an electronic communications network.

Justification

New emerging technologies such as Lifi, as acknowledged in the European Electronic Communications Code, should be included in particular in light of the potential of such technologies, not using radio waves but light, for public spaces such as hospitals, where radio waves might not be the most appropriate.

The transfer rate should not be affected taking into consideration that at some times there will be a large number of users connected to the access point.

Amendment 26

Proposal for a regulation

Article 2 – paragraph 1 – point 2

Regulation (EU) No 283/2014

Article 4 – paragraph 1 – point c

Text proposed by the Commission

(c) support the provision of **free** local wireless connectivity in local communities.

Amendment

(c) support the provision of **high-quality** local wireless connectivity **that is free of charge and free from restrictions** in local communities.

Amendment 27

Proposal for a regulation

Article 2 – paragraph 1 – point 4

Regulation (EU) No 283/2014

Article 6 – paragraph 8a

Text proposed by the Commission

8a. Actions contributing to projects of common interest in the field of providing **free** local wireless connectivity in local communities shall meet conditions set out in Section 4 in the Annex.

Amendment

8a. Actions contributing to projects of common interest in the field of providing **high-quality** local wireless connectivity **that is free of charge and free from restrictions** in local communities shall meet conditions set out in Section 4 in the Annex.

Amendment 28

Proposal for a regulation

Article 2 – paragraph 1 – point 6

Regulation (EU) No 283/2014

Annex – section 4

6. In the Annex, the following section **shall be inserted**:

SECTION 4. WIRELESS CONNECTIVITY IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Actions aiming at the provision of free local wireless connectivity in the centres of local public life, including outdoor spaces accessible to the general public that play a major role in the public life of local communities, shall be eligible for financial assistance.

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.

Projects for the provision of wireless connectivity through freely accessible local wireless access points may receive funding if they:

- 1) are implemented by **an entity with a public mission** capable of planning and supervising the installation of indoor or outdoor local wireless access points in public spaces;
- 2) build on very high-speed broadband connectivity enabling delivery of high quality Internet experience to users that
 - a. is free, easy to access, and uses state-of-the-art equipment, and

6. In the Annex, the following section **is added**:

“SECTION 4. WIRELESS CONNECTIVITY IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Actions aiming at the provision of local wireless connectivity **that is free of charge and free from restrictions** in the centres of local public life, including outdoor spaces accessible to the general public that play a major role in the public life of local communities, shall be eligible for financial assistance. **For the purposes of accessibility, those actions shall, to the extent possible, avoid potential language barriers.**

Financial assistance shall be available to **public sector bodies within the meaning of Article 3(1) of Directive (EU) 2016/2102 of the European Parliament and of the Council^{1a}** to provide free local wireless connectivity through the installation of local wireless access points.

Eligible institutions may use financial assistance to establish free local wireless connectivity in locations that are most suitable and accessible for community usage, including on non-publicly owned property.

Projects for the provision of wireless connectivity through freely accessible local wireless access points may receive funding if they:

- 1) are implemented by **a public sector body** capable of planning and supervising the installation, **as well as ensuring the financing of operating costs for minimum of three years**, of indoor or outdoor local wireless access points in public spaces;
- 2) build on very high-speed broadband connectivity enabling delivery of high quality Internet experience to users that
 - a. is free, easy to access, and uses state-of-the-art equipment, **taking advantage of optimal technological solutions as well as**

b. supports access to innovative digital services, such as those offered via digital service infrastructures;

3) use the common visual identity to be provided by the Commission and link to the associated online tools

Projects duplicating already existing private or public offers of similar characteristics, including quality, in the same area shall not be covered.

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.

using the best standards on cyber security, and

b. supports access to innovative digital services, such as those offered via digital service infrastructures;

3) use the common visual identity to be provided by the Commission and link to the associated online tools;

3a) *respect the principle of technological neutrality, use public funding efficiently and are able to adapt projects to the best technological offers.*

Projects duplicating already existing **free** private or public offers of similar characteristics, including quality, in the same area shall not be covered.

The available budget shall be allocated in a geographically balanced manner **in the Member States** to projects meeting the above conditions in view of the proposals received and, in principle, on a 'first come, first served' basis, **in keeping with the work programmes contributing to economic, social and territorial cohesion in the Union and promoting digital inclusion.**

Member States may allocate their own resources or resources from the European Structural and Investment Funds to develop complementary services and offers that boost the sustainability of projects.

Projects financed under this section shall be in operation and closely monitored by the Commission for at least three years. The monitoring of the project by the Commission shall continue beyond the operational period to provide an overview of functionality of this project and possible input for future initiatives.

^{1a} Directive (EU) 2016/2102 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 October 2016 on the accessibility of websites and mobile applications of public sector bodies (OJ L 327, 2.12.2016, p. 1)."

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

The WiFi4EU initiative is a proposal that will help to bolster the development of a more inclusive European digital society.

In his State of the Union address of 14 September 2016, the Commission President, Jean-Claude Juncker, spoke of ‘a new legal framework that attracts and enables investments in connectivity’, where ‘connectivity should benefit everyone’.

According to the commitment given by Jean-Claude Juncker, ‘everyone benefiting from connectivity means that it should not matter where you live or how much you earn’, and he therefore proposed ‘to equip every European village and every city with free wireless Internet access around the main centres of public life by 2020’.

In this context, the WiFi4EU initiative represents an opportunity, as part of the communications package, to affirm the principle of universal access for European citizens to the benefits of the information society, by implementing a pilot scheme with a balanced geographical dimension and distribution that will serve as a reference point for the development of inclusive platforms providing free access to wireless networks that is dynamic and resilient in the face of technological change.

It also opens up the possibility of developing and applying a concept to differentiate the European digital identity, incorporating the values that inspired the European project into the design of the pilot scheme, with a focus on solutions for citizens and the opportunities created for businesses and content creators.

Universal access aims to boost local digital ecosystems, strengthen the link between the European Union and its citizens, and create more and better opportunities for the development of new-generation networks.

To this end, it is crucial to ensure that the focus on access to networks is complemented by the universal free availability of public interest services and content of general interest, and to promote a simplified application and implementation system that will guarantee transparency and certification of project quality and compliance with the requirements.

The amendments proposed in this report aim to guarantee a better response to the following principles around which the initiative is structured:

1. Universal free access

The access networks promoted in the EU should deliver an Internet experience of high-speed broadband services, thus contributing to the development of the European gigabit society. This access should be universal, free of charge and free from restrictions.

Free access means that no direct remuneration is made, through commercial advertising or the commercial use of users’ data.

2. Authentication and access system

The access points should develop into a network with an authentication system that is valid in the whole European Union territory. Access should follow the single authentication ('one login only') principle. In order to exploit the full potential of this approach, a reference template should be developed that will guarantee interoperability, collective efficiency and a common identification line, with a possibility of tying it into the specific features of each local project.

3. Eligibility

Public bodies whose mission is compatible with the project's objectives should be able to submit applications. Bearing in mind the limited amount of funding available for each project and the high number of potential applications, a system for administering the scheme is needed that will ensure rapid and efficient decisions. Consideration should be given to a voucher-based allocation scheme for this purpose.

4. Geographical balance

The principle of geographical balance across the various Member States in accessing resources under the initiative should be guaranteed. Geographical balance within each Member State should be guaranteed by criteria to be defined in the corresponding work programme.

5. Combating exclusion and promoting territorial cohesion

The criteria for approving projects should take account of the priority to be given to promoting digital inclusion and territorial cohesion.

6. Sustainability

In order to guarantee the sustainability of projects, Member States may use their own funds or the European Structural Funds to develop complementary services and offers.

7. Non-overlapping of offers

Projects should be considered only where there is no public or private offer with similar characteristics in the same area.

8. Monitoring

The Commission should ensure that a system is in place for monitoring the initiative, including the publication of reports on its implementation.

**ANNEX: LIST OF ENTITIES OR PERSONS
FROM WHOM THE RAPPORTEUR HAS RECEIVED INPUT**

The following list is drawn up on a purely voluntary basis under the exclusive responsibility of the rapporteur. The rapporteur has received input from the following entities or persons in the preparation of the report: Entity and/or person

<i>Institutional</i>	<i>External stakeholders</i>
European Commission European Council European Committee of the Regions European Economic and Social Committee Presidency of the Council of the EU	Cisco Systems ECTA ETNO EUtelsat Orange Reading & Writing Foundation UKspace Vodafone

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 1

Text proposed by the Commission

(1) The Commission Communication setting out a European vision of Internet connectivity for citizens and business in the Digital Single Market¹⁴ describes a number of possible measures capable of enhancing connectivity in the European Union.

¹⁴ 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

Amendment

(1) The Commission Communication setting out a European vision of Internet connectivity for citizens, **public institutions** and business in the Digital Single Market¹⁴ describes a number of possible measures capable of enhancing connectivity in the European Union.

¹⁴ 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

Amendment 2

Proposal for a regulation Recital 2 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(2a) Member States should enhance their efforts to address digital and connectivity gaps between regions, and in particular those with higher levels of poverty, by investing in the creation, development and improving access to wireless connectivity; addressing in particular areas identified as lagging behind in terms of connectivity and promoting digital literacy. The Union support should be complementary, through the support of projects which focus in particular on ensuring local wireless connectivity tendered by public procurement, free of charge and restrictions, in the centres of local public life, including outdoor spaces accessible to the general public.

Amendment 3

Proposal for a regulation Recital 3

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(3) Following the Communication setting out a European vision of Internet connectivity for the Digital Single Market and in order to promote digital inclusion, the Union should support the provision of **free** local wireless connectivity in the centres of local public life, including outdoor spaces accessible to the general public, through targeted support. Such support is so far not covered by Regulations (EU) No 1316/2013¹⁵ and (EU) No 283/2014¹⁶.

(3) Following the Communication setting out a European vision of Internet connectivity for the Digital Single Market and in order to promote digital inclusion, the Union should support the provision of local wireless connectivity **which is free of charge and free from unjustified restrictions** in the centres of local public life, including outdoor spaces accessible to the general public, through targeted support. Such support is so far not covered by Regulations (EU) No 1316/2013¹⁵ and (EU) No 283/2014¹⁶.

¹⁵ Regulation (EU) No 1316/20136 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing the Connecting Europe Facility, amending Regulation (EU) No 913/2010 and repealing Regulations (EC) No 680/2007 and (EC) No 67/2010, OJ L 348, 20.12.2013, p. 129, as last amended by Regulation (EU) 2015/1017 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 June 2015, OJ L 169, 1.7.2015, p. 1.

¹⁶ Regulation (EU) No 283/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 on guidelines for trans-European networks in the area of telecommunications infrastructure and repealing Decision No 1336/97/EC, OJ L 86, 21.3.2014, p. 14.

¹⁵ Regulation (EU) No 1316/20136 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing the Connecting Europe Facility, amending Regulation (EU) No 913/2010 and repealing Regulations (EC) No 680/2007 and (EC) No 67/2010, OJ L 348, 20.12.2013, p. 129, as last amended by Regulation (EU) 2015/1017 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 June 2015, OJ L 169, 1.7.2015, p. 1.

¹⁶ Regulation (EU) No 283/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 on guidelines for trans-European networks in the area of telecommunications infrastructure and repealing Decision No 1336/97/EC, OJ L 86, 21.3.2014, p. 14.

Amendment 4

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 **sector bodies, cooperatives, community owned social enterprises** and providers of public services, to offer local wireless connectivity **which is free of charge and free from unjustified restrictions** 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, **institutions, libraries and other cultural community centres, hospitals and health-care facilities, as well as other public spaces accessible to a large number of people**.

Amendment 5

Proposal for a regulation Recital 5

Text proposed by the Commission

(5) Local wireless connectivity should only qualify as free where it is provided without corresponding remuneration, whether by direct payment or other types of consideration, including, but not limited to, advertising and the provision of personal data.

Amendment

(5) Local wireless connectivity should only qualify as free ***of charge and free from unjustified restrictions*** where it is provided without corresponding remuneration, whether by direct payment or other types of consideration, including, but not limited to, advertising and the provision of personal data ***and connections using accounts to social networks; access to the free local wireless connection should integrate the agreement of users to the terms and conditions of use and a disclaimer explaining the purpose of the service, while also ensuring proper protection of personal data, bearing in mind that security risks increase with the extension of wireless connectivity.***

Amendment 6

Proposal for a regulation Recital 5 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(5a) The values and benefits of the Union should be promoted through the disclaimer of the free local wireless connection.

Amendment 7

Proposal for a regulation Recital 5 b (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(5b) Digital education tools that provide users with knowledge on how to access the internet and how to protect themselves online, and information on the benefits and

risks of the internet, should be integrated in the service.

Amendment 8

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 owned 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.

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 9

Proposal for a regulation Recital 10

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(10) To ensure that connectivity in 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.

(10) To ensure that connectivity in 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, ***continued upkeep, regular upgrading*** and auditing of the local wireless access points installed.

Amendment 10

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 ***offering a download speed of at least 100 Mbps*** 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 remote but populated, less-developed and transition regions while seeking*** to attain a geographically balanced distribution, ***promoting access for citizens to the benefits of the information society in order to reach the same average share of internet connection in all Member States, taking into consideration that an average of 97 % of Union citizens have internet access in some Member States while only 68 % do in others.***

Amendment 11

Proposal for a regulation Recital 11 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(11a) The actions financed should be viable and sustainable in the long term. This should be achieved by providing technical tools to ensure their long-term efficiency by the use of technology that is kept up to date and safe for the users by the beneficiaries and the services providers.

Amendment 12

Proposal for a regulation

Article 1 – paragraph 1 – point 2 – point b

Regulation (EU) No 1316/2013

Article 7 – paragraph 4 – point c

Text proposed by the Commission

(c) actions in the field of providing *free* local wireless connectivity in local communities shall be financed through grants or forms of financial assistance other than financial instruments.

Amendment

(c) actions in the field of providing local wireless connectivity *free of charge and free from unjustified restrictions* in local communities shall be financed through grants or forms of financial assistance other than financial instruments.

Amendment 13

Proposal for a regulation

Article 2 – paragraph 1 – point 1

Regulation (EU) No 283/2014

Article 2 – paragraph 2 – point h

Text proposed by the Commission

(h) 'local wireless access point' means a low power equipment of small size operating within a small range, using on a non-exclusive basis radio spectrum for which the conditions of availability and efficient use for this purpose are harmonised at Union level, and which allows wireless access by users to an electronic communications network.

Amendment

(h) 'local wireless access point' means a low power equipment of small size operating within a small range, using on a non-exclusive basis radio spectrum for which the conditions of availability and efficient use for this purpose are harmonised at Union level, and which allows wireless access by users to an electronic communications network *at a high broadband speed*.

Amendment 14

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 owned social enterprises*** and providers of public services, undertaking to provide free local wireless connectivity through the installation of local wireless access points.

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 15

Proposal for a regulation

Article 2 – paragraph 1 – point 6

Regulation (EU) No 283/2014

Annex – section 4 – paragraph 3 – point 2 – introductory wording

Text proposed by the Commission

2) build on very high-speed broadband connectivity enabling delivery of high quality Internet experience to users that

Amendment

2) build on very high-speed broadband connectivity enabling delivery of high quality Internet experience ***offering a download speed of at least 100 Mbps*** to users that:

Amendment 16

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;

Justification

The aim of this programme should be to bridge the geographical digital divide and it should

contribute to boost digital literacy.

Amendment 17

Proposal for a regulation

Article 2 – paragraph 1 – point 6

Regulation (EU) No 283/2014

Annex – section 4 – paragraph 3 – point 2 – point b a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

ba) has systems in place for the proper protection of personal data of users;

Amendment 18

Proposal for a regulation

Article 2 – paragraph 1 – point 6

Regulation (EU) No 283/2014

Annex – section 4 – paragraph 3 – point 2 – point b b (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

bb) is designed to reduce the digital divide;

Amendment 19

Proposal for a regulation

Article 2 – paragraph 1 – point 6

Regulation (EU) No 283/2014

Annex – section 4 – paragraph 5

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

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.

The available budget shall be allocated in a geographically balanced manner. *Projects should be funded in view of the proposals received by means of public procurement whilst meeting the above conditions, and, in principle, on a 'first come, first served' basis. This shall guarantee integration of less-developed and transition regions by prioritising projects located in areas lagging behind in terms of connectivity and digital literacy. The Commission shall publish a report identifying those geographical areas*

*based upon information provided by the
Member States, by three months after the
entry into force of the present regulation.*

PROCEDURE – COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Title	Promotion of Internet connectivity in local communities
References	COM(2016)0589 – C8-0378/2016 – 2016/0287(COD)
Committee responsible Date announced in plenary	ITRE 6.10.2016
Opinion by Date announced in plenary	BUDG 6.10.2016
Rapporteur Date appointed	Liadh Ní Riada 10.10.2016
Date adopted	3.4.2017
Result of final vote	+: 33 –: 2 0: 1
Members present for the final vote	Nedzhmi Ali, Jean Arthuis, Lefteris Christoforou, Gérard Deprez, Manuel dos Santos, José Manuel Fernandes, Eider Gardiazabal Rubial, Jens Geier, Ingeborg Gräßle, Iris Hoffmann, Bernd Kölmel, Zbigniew Kuźmiuk, Clare Moody, Siegfried Mureşan, Victor Negrescu, Liadh Ní Riada, Jan Olbrycht, Younous Omarjee, Pina Picierno, Paul Rübig, Petri Sarvamaa, Jordi Solé, Eleftherios Synadinos, Indrek Tarand, Isabelle Thomas, Monika Vana, Daniele Viotti, Marco Zanni, Stanisław Żółtek
Substitutes present for the final vote	Nicola Caputo, Ivana Maletić, Andrey Novakov, Marco Valli, Tomáš Zdechovský
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	Othmar Karas, Bernd Lucke

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

33	+
ALDE	Nedzhmi Ali, Jean Arthuis, Gérard Deprez
ECR	Zbigniew Kuźmiuk, Bernd Lucke
EFDD	Marco Valli
GUE/NGL	Liadh Ní Riada, Younous Omarjee
NI	Eleftherios Synadinos
PPE	Lefteris Christoforou, José Manuel Fernandes, Ingeborg Gräßle, Othmar Karas, Ivana Maletić, Siegfried Mureşan, Andrey Novakov, Jan Olbrycht, Paul Rübig, Petri Sarvamaa, Tomáš Zdechovský
S&D	Nicola Caputo, Eider Gardiazabal Rubial, Jens Geier, Iris Hoffmann, Clare Moody, Victor Negrescu, Pina Picierno, Isabelle Thomas, Daniele Viotti, Manuel dos Santos
Verts/ALE	Jordi Solé, Indrek Tarand, Monika Vana

2	-
ECR	Bernd Kölmel
ENF	Stanisław Żółtek

1	0
ENF	Marco Zanni

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention

10.4.2017

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT AND TOURISM

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: Claudia Țapardel

SHORT JUSTIFICATION

As transportation enters a new era, the true challenges for local authorities will not be about reinventing the wheel, but about finding ways to improve services in relation to citizens' real-time mobility needs. Digitalisation is bringing significant structural changes to transportation systems and communities are now beginning to look into different aspects such as data and travel information, network planning, ticketing or service quality, based on a new user-centred philosophy.

Within this context, the Commission's proposal for free local wireless connectivity in the centre of public life is both timely and necessary, bringing new opportunities for providers to improve their services. Simultaneously, the proposal offers the mechanism by which the private and public can cooperate openly and efficiently, in line with collaborative principles and with the ultimate aim of improving services.

For city planners and public authorities responsible for transportation, the deployment of free Wi-Fi spots will help with obtaining a better contextualisation of current mobility patterns, especially where traditional tools such as statistics might prove to be insufficient. The data that will be collected will be used for the assessment of existing policies and services, ensuring real-time feedback on people's travel choices, but also supporting targeted investments. Overall, authorities will be able to create safer roads, optimise transportation routes, reduce infrastructure costs, and alleviate discomfort created by congestion and pollution.

For consumers, having free Wi-Fi spots will translate into a higher degree of connectivity and flexibility, as they will benefit not just from a better use of their time, but also of a better range of public transportation services. At the same time, for tourists, Wifi4EU would mean increased access and better information at the destination.

Nevertheless, the ambitious proposal put forward by the European Commission needs to be backed by provisions that will ensure both clear criteria for selecting the beneficiaries, as well as continuity beyond the proposed life cycle of the projects. Moreover, it is important that the funds allocated for the deployment of hotspots go beyond raising the profile of the EU, and contribute to the solving of real connectivity needs.

Overall, the rapporteur chooses to support the Commission's proposal, with the amendment that the initiative should be extended to cover local transport services and touristic sites. This would enhance the efficiency of transportation in communities, while offering high quality services to consumers. Nevertheless, in the absence of an impact study and taking into account the small funds made available, the rapporteur recommends that the Commission establish clear criteria for selecting the communities that will benefit from the initiative, and ensure a thorough scrutiny of all projects submitted for funding.

AMENDMENTS

The Committee on Transport and Tourism 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 2

Text proposed by the Commission

(2) Amongst measures to support the vision of European connectivity, it promotes the deployment of local wireless access points through simplified planning procedures and reduced regulatory obstacles. Such access points, including those ancillary to the provision of other public services or non-commercial in character, can make an important contribution to the improvement of current and the deployment of future generations of wireless communications networks by facilitating more granular coverage in line with evolving needs.

Amendment

(2) Amongst measures to support the vision of European connectivity, it promotes the deployment of local wireless access points through simplified planning procedures and reduced regulatory obstacles. Such access points including those ancillary to the provision of other public services or non-commercial in character, can make an important contribution to the improvement of current and the deployment of future generations of wireless communications networks by facilitating more granular coverage in line with evolving needs. ***Those access points can be integrated into a European network with a single authentication system in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council^{1a}.***

^{1a} Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation) (OJ L 119, 4.5.2016, p. 1).

Amendment 2

Proposal for a regulation

Recital 2 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(2 a) EU policies that seek to promote internet infrastructure and the efficient use

of the wireless spectrum and seek to increase the connectivity of European citizens by allowing for easier access to the internet should promote the concept of the 'internet of things' (IoT), having particular regard for its potential for growth innovation, improved applications and services related to public transport systems.

Amendment 3

Proposal for a regulation

Recital 3

Text proposed by the Commission

(3) Following the Communication setting out a European vision of Internet connectivity for the Digital Single Market and in order to promote digital inclusion, the Union should support the provision of free local wireless connectivity in the centres of local public life, including outdoor spaces accessible to the general public, through targeted support. Such support is so far not covered by Regulations (EU) No 1316/2013¹⁵ and (EU) No 283/2014¹⁶.

¹⁵ Regulation (EU) No 1316/20136 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing the Connecting Europe Facility, amending Regulation (EU) No 913/2010 and repealing Regulations (EC) No 680/2007 and (EC) No 67/2010, OJ L 348, 20.12.2013, p. 129, as last amended by Regulation (EU) 2015/1017 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 June 2015, OJ L 169, 1.7.2015, p. 1.

¹⁶ Regulation (EU) No 283/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 on guidelines for trans-European networks in the area of telecommunications infrastructure and repealing Decision No 1336/97/EC, OJ L 86,

Amendment

(3) Following the Communication setting out a European vision of Internet connectivity for the Digital Single Market and in order to promote digital inclusion, the Union should support the provision of free, safe **and secure** local wireless connectivity **free of charge and free from restrictions** in the centres of local public life, including outdoor spaces accessible to the general public, **as well as in public transport facilities and vehicles** through targeted support. Such support is so far not covered by Regulations (EU) No 1316/2013¹⁵ and (EU) No 283/2014¹⁶.

¹⁵ Regulation (EU) No 1316/20136 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing the Connecting Europe Facility, amending Regulation (EU) No 913/2010 and repealing Regulations (EC) No 680/2007 and (EC) No 67/2010, OJ L 348, 20.12.2013, p. 129, as last amended by Regulation (EU) 2015/1017 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 June 2015, OJ L 169, 1.7.2015, p. 1.

¹⁶ Regulation (EU) No 283/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 on guidelines for trans-European networks in the area of telecommunications infrastructure and repealing Decision No 1336/97/EC, OJ L 86,

Amendment 4

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 ***and in particular local and regional*** mission such as public authorities and providers of public services to offer free local wireless connectivity ***free of charge and free from restrictions*** 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, ***health centres, schools, retirement homes, orphanages, public transport services and infrastructures- such as stations or terminals-, tourist related services and other entities of particular interest for the local community and its people.***

Amendment 5

Proposal for a regulation

Recital 5

Text proposed by the Commission

(5) Local wireless connectivity should only ***qualify as free*** where it is provided without corresponding remuneration, whether by direct payment or other types of consideration, including, but not limited to, advertising and the provision of personal data.

Amendment

(5) Local wireless connectivity should only ***be considered to be free of charge and free from restrictions*** where it is provided without corresponding remuneration, whether by direct payment or other types of consideration, including, but not limited to, advertising and the provision of personal data.

Amendment 6

Proposal for a regulation
Recital 5 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(5a) To guarantee the success of the initiative and to give visibility of the European Union action in this area, the Commission must ensure that the entities, that are pursuing projects through this initiative, and users are correctly informed on the availability of the services and make prominent the fact that the EU has granted financing.

Amendment 7

Proposal for a regulation
Recital 6

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(6) Considering its specific purpose and targeted nature toward local needs, the intervention should be identified as a distinct project of common interest in the telecommunications sector within the meaning of Regulations (EU) No 1316/2013 and (EU) No 283/2014.

(6) Considering its specific purpose and targeted nature toward local needs, **especially less developed areas with a greater need for connectivity**, the intervention should be identified as a distinct project of common interest in the telecommunications sector within the meaning of Regulations (EU) No 1316/2013 and (EU) No 283/2014.

Amendment 8

Proposal for a regulation
Recital 8

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(8) Given the non-commercial nature of this intervention and the small scale of individual projects foreseen, the administrative burden should be limited to a minimum. Therefore, the intervention should be implemented by the most appropriate forms of financial assistance, notably grants, available under the Financial Regulation, now or in future. The intervention should not rely on financial instruments.

(8) Given the non-commercial nature of this intervention and the small scale of individual projects foreseen, the administrative burden should be limited to a minimum. **This should be done by simplifying planning procedure and relaxing regulatory obligations.** Therefore, the intervention should be implemented by the most appropriate forms of financial assistance, notably grants, available under

the Financial Regulation, now or in future.
The intervention should not rely on financial instruments.

Amendment 9

Proposal for a regulation

Recital 9

Text proposed by the Commission

(9) Due to the limited reach of any single local wireless access point and the small value of individual projects covered, access points benefitting from financial assistance under this Regulation are not expected to challenge commercial offers. In order to further ensure that such financial assistance does not unduly distort competition, crowd out private investments or create disincentives for private operators to invest, the intervention should be limited to projects that do not duplicate already existing private or public offers *of similar characteristics* in the same area. This should not exclude additional support to deployments under this initiative from public or private sources of funding.

Amendment

(9) Due to the limited reach of any single local wireless access point and the small value of individual projects covered, access points benefitting from financial assistance under this Regulation are not expected to challenge commercial offers. In order to further ensure that such financial assistance does not unduly distort competition, crowd out private investments or create disincentives for private operators to invest, the intervention should be limited to projects that do not duplicate already existing private or public offers in the same area. This should not exclude additional support to deployments under this initiative from public or private sources of funding. ***This programme should be compatible and additional with National and Regional Operating Programmes, especially with those financed by the ERDF, creating synergy between them.***

Amendment 10

Proposal for a regulation

Recital 10

Text proposed by the Commission

(10) To ensure that connectivity in 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

Amendment

(10) To ensure that connectivity in accordance with this Regulation is provided quickly, financial assistance should be implemented ***through streamlined administrative procedure*** using ***standardised documentation*** to the fullest extent possible, ***using both on-line and other conventional*** tools that allow for the swift submission and

installed.

handling of applications and support the implementation, monitoring and auditing of the local wireless access points installed.

Amendment 11

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 high-speed broadband services, ***as defined in the Commission Communication of 14 September 2016 entitled ‘Connectivity for a Digital Single Market - towards a European Gigabit Society’, which sets a target for 2025 of ensuring that all European households have an internet connection speed of at least 100 Mbps***, financial assistance should seek to attain a ***regionally*** balanced distribution, ***including in remote and cross-border areas, which often suffer from a lack of private network coverage, promoting the principle of universal access for citizens to the benefits of the information society, with particular attention being paid to rural, outermost, islands, border and mountain areas.***

Amendment 12

Proposal for a regulation Recital 11 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(11a) In accordance with Article 349 TFEU, account should be taken, in relation to geographically balanced distribution, of specific measures for the outermost regions, given their remoteness and the costs associated with access to the Internet and high-speed broadband services.

Amendment 13

Proposal for a regulation Recital 11 b (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(11b) Given the importance of connectivity needs within the European Union, it is important that the Commission develops a long-term strategy for the deployment of wireless spots guaranteeing the continuity of the programme also after the proposed three years, while ensuring that no commercial use will be made of the infrastructures put in place, at the end of the financing period and non-accepting projects for a period of less than three years.

Amendment 14

Proposal for a regulation Recital 11 c (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(11c) Similarly, given the non-commercial nature of the intervention, the Commission and the Member States must make sure that the infrastructure developed is not used commercially once the funding period has come to an end.

Amendment 15

Proposal for a regulation Article 1 – paragraph 1 – point 2 – point b Regulation (EU) No 1316/2013 Article 7 – paragraph 4 – point c

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(c) actions in the field of providing *free* local wireless connectivity in local

(c) actions in the field of providing free of charge *and free from restrictions, and*

communities shall be financed through grants or forms of financial assistance other than financial instruments.

safe and secure local wireless connectivity in local communities shall be financed through grants or forms of financial assistance other than financial instruments.

Amendment 16

Proposal for a regulation

Article 1 – paragraph 1 – point 4

Regulation (EU) No 1316/2013

Article 10 – paragraph 4 – subparagraph 3

Text proposed by the Commission

Actions in the field of providing free local wireless connectivity in local communities shall be funded by Union financial assistance up to 100 % of the eligible costs, without prejudice to the co-financing principle.

Amendment

Actions in the field of providing free *and safe* local wireless connectivity in local communities shall be funded by Union financial assistance up to 100 % of the eligible costs, without prejudice to the co-financing principle.

(Protection of data is essential therefore the internet connection, besides being free, also needs to be safe)

Amendment 17

Proposal for a regulation

Article 2 – paragraph 1 – point 1

Regulation (EU) No 283/2014

Article 2 – paragraph 2 – point h

Text proposed by the Commission

(h) 'local wireless access point' means a low power equipment of small size operating within a small range, using on a non-exclusive basis radio spectrum for which the conditions of availability and efficient use for this purpose are harmonised at Union level, and which allows wireless access by users to an electronic communications network.

Amendment

(h) 'local wireless access point' means a low power equipment of small size operating within a small range, using on a non-exclusive basis radio spectrum for which the conditions of availability and efficient use for this purpose are harmonised at Union level, and which allows *free local* wireless access by users to an electronic communications network.

Amendment 18

Proposal for a regulation

Article 2 – paragraph 1 – point 2

Text proposed by the Commission

(c) support the provision of free local wireless connectivity in local communities.

Amendment

(c) support the provision of free ***and safe and secure*** local wireless connectivity in local communities, ***which guarantees a minimum connection of 100 Mbps or, in default, the maximum available speed in the market, services linked with sustainable mobility would be also included.***

Amendment 19

Proposal for a regulation

Article 2 – paragraph 1 – point 3 – point b

Regulation (EU) No 283/2014

Article 5 – paragraph 5a

Text proposed by the Commission

5a. Action contributing to the projects of common interest in the field of providing free local wireless connectivity in local communities shall be supported by:

Amendment

5a. Action contributing to the projects of common interest in the field of providing free ***and safe*** local wireless connectivity in local communities shall be supported by:

Amendment 20

Proposal for a regulation

Article 2 – paragraph 1 – point 4

Regulation (EU) No 283/2014

Article 6 – paragraph 8 a

Text proposed by the Commission

8a. Actions contributing to projects of common interest in the field of providing free local wireless connectivity in local communities shall meet conditions set out in Section 4 in the Annex.

Amendment

8a. Actions contributing to projects of common interest in the field of providing free ***and safe*** local wireless connectivity in local communities shall meet conditions set out in Section 4 in the Annex.

Amendment 21

Proposal for a regulation

Article 2 – paragraph 1 – point 6

Regulation (EU) No 283/2014

Annex – section 4 – paragraph 1 – subparagraph 1

Text proposed by the Commission

Actions aiming at the provision of free local wireless connectivity in the centres of local public life, including outdoor spaces accessible to the general public that play a major role in the public life of local communities, shall be eligible for financial assistance.

Amendment

Actions aiming at the provision of free, **safe and secure** local wireless connectivity in the centres of local life, including outdoor spaces accessible to the general public that play a major role in the public life of local communities, shall be eligible for financial assistance, **including public transport services and touristic sites**.

Amendment 22

Proposal for a regulation

Article 2 – paragraph 1 – point 6

Regulation (EU) No 283/2014

Annex – section 4 – paragraph 1 – subparagraph 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 and providers of public services undertaking to provide free, **safe and secure** local wireless connectivity through the installation of local wireless access points **or combined with the implementation of public transport services**.

Amendment 23

Proposal for a regulation

Article 2 – paragraph 1 – point 6

Regulation (EU) No 283/2014

Annex – section 4 – paragraph 1 – subparagraph 3 – point 2 – point a

Text proposed by the Commission

a. is free, easy to access, and uses state-

Amendment

a. is free, **safe**, easy to access, and uses

of-the-art equipment, and

state-of-the-art equipment, and

Amendment 24

Proposal for a regulation

Article 2 – paragraph 1 – point 6

Regulation (EU) No 283/2014

Annex – section 4 – paragraph 1 – subparagraph 3 – point 2 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

2 a) encourage the better integration of local communities in the Digital Single Market and boost the development of innovative digital services and applications - offered by local SMEs and transport and tourism businesses;

Amendment 25

Proposal for a regulation

Article 2 – paragraph 1 – point 6

Regulation (EU) No 283/2014

Annex – section 4 – paragraph 1 – subparagraph 4

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

Projects duplicating already existing private or public offers of similar characteristics, including quality, in the same area shall not be covered.

Projects duplicating **or overlapping** already existing private or public offers of similar characteristics, including quality, in the same area shall not be covered. **The local wireless access points funded under this Regulation shall cover primarily public spaces.**

Amendment 26

Proposal for a regulation

Article 2 – paragraph 1 – point 6

Regulation (EU) No 283/2014

Annex – section 4 – paragraph 1 – subparagraph 5

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

The available budget shall be allocated in a geographically balanced manner to projects

The available budget shall be allocated to **all Member States** in a geographically balanced

meeting the above conditions in view of the proposals received *and, in principle, on a 'first come, first served' basis.*

manner, with special attention to the *islands, outermost regions (as referred in Article 349 TFEU), mountainous, cross-border, smaller and lagging behind local communities* to projects meeting the above conditions in view of the proposals received.

PROCEDURE – COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Title	Promotion of Internet connectivity in local communities
References	COM(2016)0589 – C8-0378/2016 – 2016/0287(COD)
Committee responsible Date announced in plenary	ITRE 6.10.2016
Opinion by Date announced in plenary	TRAN 6.10.2016
Rapporteur Date appointed	Claudia Țapardel 8.11.2016
Discussed in committee	28.2.2017
Date adopted	11.4.2017
Result of final vote	+: 44 -: 1 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Daniela Aiuto, Lucy Anderson, Inés Ayala Sender, Georges Bach, Izaskun Bilbao Barandica, Deirdre Clune, Michael Cramer, Luis de Grandes Pascual, Andor Deli, Isabella De Monte, Ismail Ertug, Jacqueline Foster, Dieter-Lebrecht Koch, Merja Kyllönen, Miltiadis Kyrkos, Bogusław Liberadzki, Marian-Jean Marinescu, Cláudia Monteiro de Aguiar, Jens Nilsson, Markus Pieper, Salvatore Domenico Pogliese, Tomasz Piotr Poręba, Gabriele Preuß, Christine Revault D'Allonnes Bonnefoy, Dominique Riquet, Massimiliano Salini, David-Maria Sassoli, Cláudia Schmidt, Claudia Țapardel, Keith Taylor, Pavel Telička, István Ujhelyi, Peter van Dalen, Wim van de Camp, Elissavet Vozemberg-Vrionidi, Janusz Zemke, Roberts Zīle, Kosma Złotowski, Elżbieta Katarzyna Łukacijewska
Substitutes present for the final vote	Jakop Dalunde, Kateřina Konečná, Matthijs van Miltenburg, Henna Virkkunen
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	Jiří Maštálka

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

44	+
ALDE	Izaskun Bilbao Barandica, Dominique Riquet, Pavel Telička, Matthijs van Miltenburg,
ECR	Jacqueline Foster, Tomasz Piotr Poręba, Roberts Zile, Kosma Złotowski, Peter van Dalen
EFDD	Daniela Aiuto
GUE/NGL	Kateřina Konečná, Merja Kyllönen, Jiří Maštálka
PPE	Georges Bach, Deirdre Clune, Andor Deli, Dieter-Lebrecht Koch, Elżbieta Katarzyna Łukacijewska, Marian-Jean Marinescu, Cláudia Monteiro de Aguiar, Markus Pieper, Salvatore Domenico Pogliese, Massimiliano Salini, Claudia Schmidt, Henna Virkkunen, Elissavet Vozemberg-Vrionidi, Luis de Grandes Pascual, Wim van de Camp
S & D	Lucy Anderson, Inés Ayala Sender, Isabella De Monte, Ismail Ertug, Miltiadis Kyrkos, Bogusław Liberadzki, Jens Nilsson, Gabriele Preuß, Christine Revault D'Allonnes Bonnefoy, David-Maria Sassoli, Claudia Țapardel, István Ujhelyi, Janusz Zemke
VERTS/ALE	Michael Cramer, Jakop Dalunde, Keith Taylor

1	-
EFDD	Peter Lundgren

0	0

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention

29.3.2017

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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: Rosa D'Amato

SHORT JUSTIFICATION

In September 2016, the European Commission proposed an ambitious overhaul of EU telecoms rules with new initiatives to meet Europeans' growing connectivity needs and boost Europe's competitiveness.

Amongst measures to support this objective, the new package will promote the deployment of local wireless access points through simplified planning procedures and lightened regulatory obligations, inter alia where such access is provided on a non-commercial basis or is ancillary to the provision of other public services.

The object of this legislative opinion is thus the analysis of the European Commission proposal that contains amendments to the legal framework for telecommunications in the Connecting Europe Facility, contained in Regulation (EU) No 1316/2013 ('CEF Regulation') and Regulation (EU) No 283/2014, in order to promote free internet in local communities by means of an EU-funded scheme, 'WiFi4EU'.

The proposal of the Commission earmarks EUR 120 million between 2017-2019 for the WIFEU scheme, that should support the installation of state-of-the-art Wi-Fi equipment in the centres of community life. In this regard, it is essential that the equipment and the technology provided will be consistent with the highest standards available on the market and that the services provided will be user-friendly and accessible to people with low digital skills.

The rapporteur deems essential that this initiative should particularly focus on the rural areas and all the zones at risks of depopulation and abandonment.

The WiFi4EU scheme will be delivered through simple and non-bureaucratic procedures such as online applications, payments by vouchers and light-touch monitoring requirements. The rapporteur, however, stresses the importance of a proper performance auditing of the services provided during all the project lifetime, ensuring a proper balance between simplification and

control.

It is expected that the intervention will also have several positive knock-on effects ranging from the involvement of local small and medium operators in the ICT sector and participation in democratic life, including for demographic groups otherwise facing difficulty in accessing connectivity, also promoting the concept of “internet of things and services”.

In order to avoid duplication of projects and dispersion of the funds, the rapporteur insists also on the need for synergies with the ERDF funding, also considering the huge investments in the Thematic Objective n.2 (Enhancing access to, and use and quality of information and communication technologies) for 2014-2020 programming period.

The rapporteur agrees with the principle of the geographical balance proposed by the Commission but considers that the principle of economic social and territorial cohesion enshrined in the Treaties should be duly taken into account in the implementation of WIFI4EU and in defining the criteria of choice of the applications presented by the local authorities. Projects applying to the scheme should propose to equip areas where a public or a private Wi-Fi offering similar characteristics does not already exist.

AMENDMENTS

The Committee on Regional Development 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 1 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(1 a) The Commission Communication of 26 August 2010 entitled "Digital Agenda for Europe" observes that Europe 2020 Strategy has underlined the importance of broadband deployment to promote social inclusion and competitiveness in the Union and restates the objective of bringing basic broadband to all Union citizens by 2013 and of ensuring that, by 2020, all Union citizens have access to much higher internet speeds of above 30 Mbps and that 50 % or more of Union households subscribe to internet connections of above 100 Mbps.

Amendment 2

Proposal for a regulation

Recital 2

Text proposed by the Commission

(2) Amongst measures to support the vision of European connectivity, it promotes the deployment of local wireless access points through simplified planning procedures and reduced regulatory obstacles. Such access points, including those ancillary to the provision of other public services or non-commercial in character, can make an important contribution to the improvement of current and the deployment of future generations of wireless communications networks by facilitating more granular coverage in line with evolving needs.

Amendment

(2) Amongst measures to support the vision of European connectivity, it promotes the deployment of local wireless access points through simplified planning procedures and reduced regulatory obstacles. Such access points, including those ancillary to the provision of other public services or non-commercial in character, can make an important contribution to the improvement of current and the deployment of future generations of wireless communications networks by facilitating *a* more granular coverage *of the Union territory* in line with *current and* evolving needs. *Given the rapid progress of the digital technology, regular checks and quality controls should be carried out in order to ensure the high quality and proper functioning of the local wireless access points, aiming to turn this initiative more sustainable and long-lasting.*

Amendment 3

Proposal for a regulation
Recital 2 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(2 a) A further Union measure to support the vision of connectivity in the Union should ensure that house-by-house connectivity allows Union citizens to make easier use of the internet and promotes the concept of “internet of things and services”.

Amendment 4

Proposal for a regulation
Recital 3

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(3) Following the Communication

(3) Following the Communication

setting out a European vision of Internet connectivity for the Digital Single Market and in order to promote digital inclusion, the Union should support the provision of free local wireless connectivity in the centres of local public life, including outdoor spaces accessible to the general public, through targeted support. Such support is so far not covered by Regulations (EU) No 1316/2013¹⁵ and (EU) No 283/2014¹⁶.

setting out a European vision of Internet connectivity for the Digital Single Market and in order to promote digital *literacy and* inclusion, the Union should support the provision of free, *high-speed* local wireless connectivity *of a high quality* in the centres of local public life, including outdoor spaces accessible to the general public, through targeted support, *with a minimum connection speed of 100 megabit/s thus meeting the targets relating to the Gigabit society, which aim to deploy ultra-fast speed broadband by 2025*. Such support is so far not covered by Regulations (EU) No 1316/2013¹⁵ and (EU) No 283/2014¹⁶. *Digital inclusion should not discriminate remote location and rural zones. Better internet connectivity should lead to better access to information and communications and therefore have a positive impact to the Social Progress Index (SPI) of regions.*

¹⁵ Regulation (EU) No 1316/20136 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing the Connecting Europe Facility, amending Regulation (EU) No 913/2010 and repealing Regulations (EC) No 680/2007 and (EC) No 67/2010, OJ L 348, 20.12.2013, p. 129, as last amended by Regulation (EU) 2015/1017 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 June 2015, OJ L 169, 1.7.2015, p. 1.

¹⁶ Regulation (EU) No 283/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 on guidelines for trans-European networks in the area of telecommunications infrastructure and repealing Decision No 1336/97/EC, OJ L 86, 21.3.2014, p. 14.

¹⁵ Regulation (EU) No 1316/20136 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing the Connecting Europe Facility, amending Regulation (EU) No 913/2010 and repealing Regulations (EC) No 680/2007 and (EC) No 67/2010, OJ L 348, 20.12.2013, p. 129, as last amended by Regulation (EU) 2015/1017 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 June 2015, OJ L 169, 1.7.2015, p. 1.

¹⁶ Regulation (EU) No 283/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 on guidelines for trans-European networks in the area of telecommunications infrastructure and repealing Decision No 1336/97/EC, OJ L 86, 21.3.2014, p. 14.

Amendment 5

Proposal for a regulation Recital 4

(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**.

(4) Support of this kind should encourage entities with a public mission such as **local** public authorities to offer free local wireless connectivity, **while guaranteeing high levels of cybersecurity-** as an ancillary service to their public mission; **in this regard, such support should thus help** to ensure that local communities **are guaranteed access to information and involvement in (digital) public life, can improve their digital skills and** can experience the benefits of very high-speed broadband in the centres of public life. Such entities could include **premises of the municipal administrations** and other local public authorities **and their immediate vicinity as well as public** libraries, **museums, schools and universities, community centres, multipurpose spaces, culture, sport, youth establishments, municipal squares and parks as well as health care facilities, also ensuring that the interactions between those bodies and the local services providers are less burdensome and faster for the SMEs and the whole process less bureaucratic. The offer of high-speed free wireless connectivity could be also provided to free accessible spaces of public transport, such as waiting areas. Improving access to fast and ultra-fast broadband and ICT services, especially in remote areas, can increase the quality of life of individuals by facilitating access to services (e.g. e-Health and e-Government) and the economic possibilities for local business and start-ups, ultimately improving social inclusion, economic growth and competitiveness. The competent authorities should therefore ensure that nobody is left behind and that the internet content and online services are accessible to all, including citizens who are not digitally literate and people with disabilities.**

Amendment 6

Proposal for a regulation Recital 4 a (new)

(4a) The Union initiative of deployment of local wireless access points should pave the way for the creation of a common pan-European network through WiFi4EU (SSID) which would also be a trademark for quick and secure pan-Union WiFi.

Amendment 7

Proposal for a regulation

Recital 5

Text proposed by the Commission

(5) Local wireless connectivity should only qualify as free where it is provided without corresponding remuneration, whether by direct payment or other types of consideration, including, but not limited to, advertising and the provision of personal data.

Amendment

(5) Local wireless connectivity should only qualify as free where it is provided without corresponding remuneration, whether by direct payment or other types of consideration, including, but not limited to, advertising, **time limits** and the provision of personal data, **in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Directive (EU) 2016/680 of the European Parliament and of the Council. Under no circumstances should the Union-co-financed wireless internet be made dependent on purchasing goods or services.**

Amendment 8

Proposal for a regulation

Recital 6

Text proposed by the Commission

(6) Considering its specific purpose and targeted nature toward local needs, the intervention should be identified as a distinct project of common interest in the telecommunications sector within the meaning of Regulations (EU) No 1316/2013 and (EU) No 283/2014.

Amendment

(6) Considering its specific purpose and targeted nature toward local needs **and the need to create a common Union mapping standard, which allows the regions in greatest need and the potential multiplier effect to be identified**, the intervention should be identified as a distinct project of common interest in the telecommunications

Amendment 9

Proposal for a regulation

Recital 8

Text proposed by the Commission

(8) Given the non-commercial nature of this intervention and the small scale of individual projects foreseen, the administrative burden should be limited to a minimum. Therefore, the intervention should be implemented by the most appropriate forms of financial assistance, notably grants, available under the Financial Regulation, now or in future. The intervention should not rely on financial instruments.

Amendment

(8) Given the non-commercial nature of this intervention and the small scale of individual projects foreseen, the administrative burden should be limited to a minimum ***taking into account the need for accountability and a proper balance between simplification and control.*** Therefore, the intervention should be implemented by the most appropriate forms of financial assistance, notably grants, available under the Financial Regulation, now or in future. The intervention should not rely on financial instruments. ***The principle of sound financial management should apply.***

Amendment 10

Proposal for a regulation

Recital 8 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(8 a) Implementation of this initiative should take into account possible synergy with other existing Union programmes and funds.

Amendment 11

Proposal for a regulation

Recital 9

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(9) Due to the limited reach of any single

(9) Due to the limited reach of any single

local wireless access point and the small value of individual projects covered, access points benefitting from financial assistance under this Regulation are not expected to challenge commercial offers. In order to further ensure that such financial assistance does not unduly distort competition, crowd out private investments or create disincentives for private operators to invest, the intervention should be limited to projects that do not duplicate already existing *private or public* offers of similar characteristics in the same area. This should not exclude additional support to deployments under this initiative from public or private sources of funding.

local wireless access point and the small value of individual projects covered, access points benefitting from financial assistance under this Regulation are not expected to challenge commercial offers. In order to further ensure that such financial assistance does not unduly distort competition, crowd out private investments or create disincentives for private operators to invest, the intervention should be limited to projects that do not duplicate already existing *offers of similar characteristics available free of charge under similar terms* in the same area *served by existing public WLAN routers*. This should not exclude additional support to deployments under this initiative from public or private sources of funding. *Double financing should be excluded but municipalities which already offer access at lower speeds should continue to be eligible for support with a view to promoting the blanket availability of fast internet access.*

Amendment 12

Proposal for a regulation Recital 9 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(9a) The available budget should be allocated in a geographically balanced manner to projects across Member States and dedicated to areas at risk of long-lasting digital divide, with an adequate minimum number of vouchers per Member State. Giving local SMEs priority in the context of the procurement and installation of equipment with a view to the provision of WLAN in accordance with this Regulation would safeguard the potential for innovation and job creation in municipalities. The principle aiming to ensure geographical balance should be included in the relevant work programmes adopted pursuant to Regulation (EU) 1316/2013, and should be further specified

in calls for proposals.

Amendment 13

Proposal for a regulation Recital 10

Text proposed by the Commission

(10) To ensure that connectivity in 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.

Amendment

(10) To ensure that connectivity in accordance with this Regulation is provided quickly, ***it is essential that local and regional authorities and WiFi equipment providers, in particular SMEs based in local communities, are informed promptly and effectively of the availability of enhanced connectivity by broadband competence officers (BCO), and when necessary helped to apply for it.*** 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 ***effective*** auditing of the local wireless access points installed, ***with proper performance auditing of the services provided during the lifetime of the project particularly given the new administrative procedures adopted (by means of a vouchers scheme).*** ***In consideration of the common challenges that rural, remote and sparsely populated areas are facing, compared to urban areas, concerning broadband, such as structurally lower and fragmented demand as well as higher unit (i.e. per end-user) deployment and infrastructure maintenance costs, measures should to be taken for those areas to benefit from free, high-speed local wireless connectivity of high quality. Local wireless connectivity points should be made visible and publicised by local authorities by means of information campaigns aimed at the general public. Moreover, in order to increase the awareness of the importance of the promotion of the connectivity, also projects not receiving the support under the WIF14EU scheme and being positively evaluated could be awarded a quality label***

as in the ‘Seal of Excellence’, which could lead to a fast-track system of calls under other sources of funding where appropriate.

Amendment 14

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 considering both the evolution of the urban-rural digital divide which broadens with new technological developments*** and the *subsequent* urgency of promoting access networks, that can deliver, throughout the EU, ***(including in isolated regions, areas with limited access, islands and the outermost regions) an easy and user-friendly*** Internet experience of high quality based on very high-speed broadband services ***and on the use of multilingual access pages***, financial assistance should seek to attain a geographically balanced distribution, ***taking into account the principle of economic, social and territorial cohesion and the different levels of development of ICT infrastructure. In the case of natural disasters (such as floods or earthquakes) the free WiFi network should be unlimited, safe and high speed in order to support quick communication between emergency services and citizens.***

Amendment 15

Proposal for a regulation

Recital 11 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(11 a) Distribution of interventions should take in consideration socio-economic differences of Union regions and should aim to improve condition of life, creating a better working environment and diminishing the risks of unemployment and

depopulation. Particular attention should be paid to rural areas, areas affected by industrial transition and regions which suffer from severe and permanent natural or demographic disadvantage. Taking into account the benefits of the programme for the economic and social development for the local communities, and on the basis of a preliminary evaluation report of the first phase of the implementation of this measure that should be made available to the European Parliament and the Council, this initiative could serve to prepare future sustainable extension of the programme.

Amendment 16

Proposal for a regulation

Article 2 – paragraph 1 – point 2

Regulation (EU) No. 283/2014

Article 4 – paragraph 1 – point c

Text proposed by the Commission

(c) support the provision of free local wireless connectivity in local communities.

Amendment

(c) support the provision of free, **unlimited, safe, high speed** local wireless connectivity in local communities, **which shall be close to the highest standards available on the market.**

Amendment 17

Proposal for a regulation

Article 2 – paragraph 1 – point 4

Regulation (EU) No 283/2014

Article 6 – paragraph 8a

Text proposed by the Commission

8 a. Actions contributing to projects of common interest in the field of providing free local wireless connectivity in local communities shall meet conditions set out in Section 4 in the Annex.

Amendment

8 a. Actions contributing to projects of common interest in the field of providing free, **high-speed** local wireless connectivity in local communities shall meet conditions set out in Section 4 in the Annex.

Amendment 18

Proposal for a regulation

Article 2 – paragraph 1 – point 6

Regulation (EU) No 283/2014

Annex – section 4 – paragraph 1

Text proposed by the Commission

Actions aiming at the provision of free local wireless connectivity in the centres of local public life, including outdoor spaces accessible to the general public that play a major role in the public life of local communities, shall be eligible for financial assistance.

Amendment

Actions aiming at the provision of free, **high-speed** local wireless connectivity **of high quality** in the centres of local public life, including outdoor spaces accessible to the general public that play a major role in the public life of local communities **and local public transport where freely accessible**, shall be eligible for financial assistance. **In order to be fully used by the general public, potential linguistic barriers shall be avoided. This means that it is recommended for the whole connection system to be multilingual.**

Amendment 19

Proposal for a regulation

Article 2 – paragraph 1 – point 6

Regulation (EU) No 283/2014

Annex – section 4 – paragraph 3 – point -1 (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

- 1) have been the subject of:**
 - (a) a cost-benefit assessment which focuses on rural zones and zones at risk of depopulation and abandonment and the social added value of wireless connectivity in those zones, leading to a European mapping standard allowing the regions in greatest need and the potential multiplier effect to be identified; and**
 - (b) a call for tender;**

Amendment 20

Proposal for a regulation

Article 2 – paragraph 1 – point 6

Regulation (EU) No 283/2014

Annex – section 4 – paragraph 3 – point 1

Text proposed by the Commission

1) are implemented by an entity with a public mission capable of planning and supervising the installation of indoor or outdoor local wireless access points in public spaces;

Amendment

1) are implemented by an entity with a public mission capable of planning and supervising the installation of indoor or outdoor local wireless access points in public spaces ***by running a dedicated quality control;***

Amendment 21

Proposal for a regulation

Article 2 – paragraph 1 – point 6

Regulation (EU) No 283/2014

Annex – section 4 – paragraph 3 – point 2 – point a

Text proposed by the Commission

a. is free, easy to access, ***and*** uses state-of-the-art equipment, and

Amendment

a. is free, ***safe***, easy to access, uses state-of-the-art equipment and ***includes the possibility to use all cross-border internet basis to avoid market segmentation at Union level and the monopoly of big companies;***

Amendment 22

Proposal for a regulation

Article 2 – paragraph 1 – point 6

Regulation (EU) No 283/2014

Annex – Section 4. — paragraph 3 – point 2 – point b

Text proposed by the Commission

b. supports access to innovative digital services, such as those offered via digital service infrastructures;

Amendment

b. supports access to innovative digital services, such as those offered via digital service infrastructures, ***as well as in emergency and crisis communications;***

Amendment 23

Proposal for a regulation

Article 2 – paragraph 1 – point 6

Regulation (EU) No 283/2014

Annex – section 4 – paragraph 3 – point 2 – point b a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

ba. does not fall below a particular speed level of connection due to an excessive number of simultaneous users;

Amendment 24

Proposal for a regulation

Article 2 – paragraph 1 – point 6

Regulation (EU) No 1234/2014

Annex – section 4 – paragraph 4

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

Projects duplicating already existing private or public offers of similar characteristics, including quality, in the same area shall not be covered.

Projects duplicating already existing private or public offers of similar characteristics, including quality, ***available free of charge under the same terms*** in the same area ***served by existing public WLAN routers*** shall not be covered, ***ensuring greater integration between all of the existing public WiFi services and avoid misspending. To that end, projects (receiving the support) should be coordinated with similar projects funded by the European Regional Development Fund. Municipalities which already offer access at lower speeds may be eligible for support with a view to promoting the blanket availability of fast internet access; mobile internet services, accessible for a fee in the location of the proposed local connectivity project, shall not be considered as a duplication of an offer.***

Amendment 25

Proposal for a regulation
Article 2 – paragraph 1 – point 6
Regulation(EU) No 283/2014
Annex – section 4 – paragraph 5

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 *taking into account the principles of economic, social and territorial cohesion enshrined in Article 174 TFEU and the regional differences in the provision of fast internet access across the Union to projects meeting the above conditions on the basis of the proposals received. An adequate part of the budget should be allocated to areas that are less developed economically and digitally including isolated regions, islands and on mountainous, border and peripheral areas, as well as areas that have been exposed to natural disasters, in order to invest the resources where they are most needed.*

PROCEDURE – COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Title	Promotion of Internet connectivity in local communities
References	COM(2016)0589 – C8-0378/2016 – 2016/0287(COD)
Committee responsible Date announced in plenary	ITRE 6.10.2016
Opinion by Date announced in plenary	REGI 6.10.2016
Rapporteur Date appointed	Rosa D'Amato 11.10.2016
Date adopted	21.3.2017
Result of final vote	+: 32 -: 1 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Franc Bogovič, Andrea Cozzolino, Rosa D'Amato, Krzysztof Hetman, Marc Joulaud, Constanze Krehl, Andrew Lewer, Louis-Joseph Manscour, Martina Michels, Iskra Mihaylova, Jens Nilsson, Andrey Novakov, Mirosław Piotrowski, Stanislav Polčák, Liliana Rodrigues, Fernando Ruas, Monika Smolková, Ruža Tomašić, Ramón Luis Valcárcel Siso, Matthijs van Miltenburg, Lambert van Nistelrooij, Derek Vaughan, Kerstin Westphal
Substitutes present for the final vote	Andor Deli, Josu Juaristi Abaunz, Ivana Maletić, Demetris Papadakis, Tomasz Piotr Poręba, Julia Reid, Davor Škrlec, Damiano Zoffoli, Milan Zver
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	Luigi Morgano

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

32	+
ALDE	Iskra Mihaylova, Matthijs van Miltenburg
ECR	Andrew Lewer, Mirosław Piotrowski, Tomasz Piotr Poręba, Ruža Tomašić
EFDD	Rosa D'Amato
GUE/NGL Group	Josu Juaristi Abaunz, Martina Michels
PPE	Franc Bogovič, Andor Deli, Krzysztof Hetman, Marc Joulaud, Ivana Maletić, Andrey Novakov, Stanislav Polčák, Fernando Ruas, Ramón Luis Valcárcel Siso, Milan Zver, Lambert van Nistelrooij
S&D	Andrea Cozzolino, Constanze Krehl, Louis-Joseph Manscour, Luigi Morgano, Jens Nilsson, Demetris Papadakis, Liliana Rodrigues, Monika Smolková, Derek Vaughan, Kerstin Westphal, Damiano Zoffoli
Verts/ALE	Davor Škrlec

1	-
EFDD	Julia Reid

0	0

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention

PROCEDURE – COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

Title	Promotion of Internet connectivity in local communities			
References	COM(2016)0589 – C8-0378/2016 – 2016/0287(COD)			
Date submitted to Parliament	14.9.2016			
Committee responsible Date announced in plenary	ITRE 6.10.2016			
Committees asked for opinions Date announced in plenary	BUDG 6.10.2016	ENVI 6.10.2016	IMCO 6.10.2016	TRAN 6.10.2016
	REGI 6.10.2016	CULT 6.10.2016		
Not delivering opinions Date of decision	ENVI 29.9.2016	IMCO 11.10.2016	CULT 11.10.2016	
Rapporteurs Date appointed	Carlos Zorrinho 16.11.2016			
Discussed in committee	6.2.2017	27.2.2017	23.3.2017	
Date adopted	25.4.2017			
Result of final vote	+ : 52 - : 7 0 : 0			
Members present for the final vote	Bendt Bendtsen, Xabier Benito Ziluaga, José Blanco López, David Borrelli, Cristian-Silviu Buşoi, Reinhard Bütikofer, Jerzy Buzek, Edward Czesak, Jakop Dalunde, Pilar del Castillo Vera, Christian Ehler, Ashley Fox, Adam Gierek, Rebecca Harms, Roger Helmer, Hans-Olaf Henkel, Eva Kaili, Krišjānis Kariņš, Seán Kelly, Jeppe Kofod, Jaromír Kohlíček, Miapetra Kumpula-Natri, Janusz Lewandowski, Paloma López Bermejo, Angelika Mlinar, Dan Nica, Angelika Niebler, Morten Helveg Petersen, Miroslav Poche, Carolina Punset, Michel Reimon, Herbert Reul, Paul Rübig, Massimiliano Salini, Algirdas Saudargas, Jean-Luc Schaffhauser, Neoklis Sylikiotis, Dario Tamburrano, Patrizia Toia, Evžen Tošenovský, Claude Turmes, Vladimir Urutchev, Kathleen Van Brempt, Martina Werner, Lieve Wierinck, Hermann Winkler, Anna Záborská, Carlos Zorrinho			
Substitutes present for the final vote	Amjad Bashir, Isabella De Monte, Francesc Gambús, Werner Langen, Olle Ludvigsson, Gesine Meissner, Clare Moody, Anne Sander, Theodor Dumitru Stolojan, Pavel Telička			
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	Georgi Pirinski			
Date tabled	4.5.2017			

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

52	+
ALDE	Gesine Meissner, Angelika Mlinar, Morten Helveg Petersen, Carolina Punset, Pavel Telička, Lieve Wierinck
EFDD	David Borrelli, Dario Tamburrano
GUE/NGL	Xabier Benito Ziluaga, Jaromír Kohlíček, Paloma López Bermejo, Neoklis Sylikiotis
PPE	Bendt Bendtsen, Jerzy Buzek, Cristian-Silviu Buşoi, Christian Ehler, Francesc Gambús, Krišjānis Kariņš, Seán Kelly, Werner Langen, Janusz Lewandowski, Angelika Niebler, Herbert Reul, Paul Rübig, Massimiliano Salini, Anne Sander, Algirdas Saudargas, Theodor Dumitru Stolojan, Vladimir Urutchev, Hermann Winkler, Anna Záborská, Pilar del Castillo Vera
S&D	José Blanco López, Isabella De Monte, Adam Gierek, Eva Kaili, Jeppe Kofod, Miapetra Kumpula-Natri, Olle Ludvigsson, Clare Moody, Dan Nica, Georgi Pirinski, Miroslav Poche, Patrizia Toia, Kathleen Van Brempt, Martina Werner, Carlos Zorrinho
Greens	Reinhard Bütikofer, Jakop Dalunde, Rebecca Harms, Michel Reimon, Claude Turmes

7	-
ECR	Amjad Bashir, Edward Czesak, Ashley Fox, Hans-Olaf Henkel, Evžen Tošenovský
EFDD	Roger Helmer
ENF	Jean-Luc Schaffhauser

0	0
---	---

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention