

Gigabit infrastructure act

In February 2023, the European Commission proposed a regulation aimed at reducing the cost of deploying gigabit electronic communications networks, and repealing Directive 2014/61/EU (the Broadband Cost Reduction Directive). After three rounds of trilogue meetings, the Parliament and Council reached a provisional agreement on the text in February 2024, and now need to formally adopt it. Parliament is scheduled to vote on the text during its second April plenary session.

Background

The EU's digital decade connectivity [target](#) aims to ensure that a fixed gigabit network with gigabit speeds covers all EU households, and that 5G mobile coverage is available for all populated areas by 2030. High-quality digital infrastructure based on such very high-capacity networks (VHCN, as defined in Article 2(2) of the [European Electronic Communications Code](#)) would underpin almost all sectors of a modern and innovative economy.

European Commission proposal

The [proposed regulation](#) seeks to facilitate and accelerate the roll-out of VHCN by promoting the shared use of existing physical infrastructure and by enabling the more efficient deployment of new physical infrastructure. This approach would allow for quicker and more cost-effective roll-out of these networks. According to the Commission, a directly applicable act, such as the proposed regulation, would be better suited for achieving the 2030 connectivity target than the current directive.

European Parliament position

In Parliament, the [file](#) was assigned to the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE). The ITRE committee [adopted](#) its report and decided to enter into interinstitutional negotiations in September 2023. A [provisional agreement](#) on the text was reached on 6 February 2024. The text was then endorsed by the Council's Permanent Representatives Committee on 16 February and by the ITRE committee on 22 February. The main points of the agreed [text](#) are as follows:

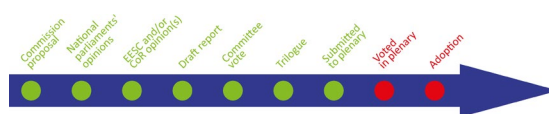
Tacit approval for permit granting – national authorities have 4 months to decide whether to grant a permit, after which, if no decision is made, the permit is considered granted. Member States can opt out of this tacit approval process by i) providing compensation under national law for operators who are harmed by delays in permit granting, or by ii) allowing operators to take the case to court or a supervisory authority.

Optional fibre-ready label for buildings – Member States may introduce a fibre-ready label indicating whether a home is connected to a true fibre network. Fibre-ready certification is no longer a prerequisite for issuing a building permit as envisaged in the Commission proposal.

Plan to abolish retail price caps for intra-EU voice and SMS services – the current [provision](#) on the retail price caps will be extended until 30 June 2032. However, fees for intra-EU calls for end-users will be abolished by 2029, subject to certain safeguards to be set out in an implementing act by the Commission after consulting [BEREC](#).

First-reading report: [2023/0046\(COD\)](#); Committee responsible: ITRE; Rapporteur: Alin Mituța (Renew, Romania). For further information, see our 'EU Legislation in progress' [briefing](#).

[Outcome of the Conference on the Future of Europe](#): This proposal is relevant for measures 43(1), (2); 44(2).



EPRS | European Parliamentary Research Service

Author: Stefano De Luca, Members' Research Service
PE 760.421 – April 2024



This document is prepared for, and addressed to, the Members and staff of the European Parliament as background material to assist them in their parliamentary work. The content of the document is the sole responsibility of its author(s) and any opinions expressed herein should not be taken to represent an official position of the Parliament. Reproduction and translation for non-commercial purposes are authorised, provided the source is acknowledged and the European Parliament is given prior notice and sent a copy. © European Union, 2024

eprs@ep.europa.eu (contact) <http://www.eprs.ep.parl.union.eu> (intranet) <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank> (internet) <http://epthinktank.eu> (blog)