

**Question for written answer E-001539/2021
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Daniel Caspary (PPE)

Subject: Taking actual bandwidths into account when providing funding for 'grey areas'

The Commission's approval of funding for 'grey areas', i.e. areas with broadband connections offering speeds of between 30 and 100Mbps, was an important step towards improving Germany's high-speed internet coverage. It is still the case, however, that telecommunications companies have the capability to provide higher bandwidths than 30 or 100Mbps, but do not do so in practice. If many people are using these networks at the same time - as currently when teleworking or engaging in distance learning, but also in the future as work goes increasingly online - only much lower bandwidths are available that are in no way sufficient for a future-proof digital Germany. Broadband speed measurements have highlighted this problem and telecommunications service providers have acknowledged it in part. In many cases, therefore, it would be highly desirable to promote the development of genuine high-speed internet connections that actually reach users. However, this is still not possible on the basis of the conditions currently imposed by the Commission, despite the increase in the funding threshold for high-speed internet to 100 Mbps.

1. Is the Commission aware of this problem?
2. Will it revise the rules so that funding can also be provided in areas where sufficient bandwidth is available in theory, but not in practice? If so, how? If not, why not?