

**Question for written answer E-003604/2023
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Alessandro Panza (ID)

Subject: Clarification about connectivity infrastructure in critical area

In February 2023, the future of connectivity package was published, which included three initiatives: a proposed gigabit infrastructure act¹; a draft gigabit connectivity recommendation (GCR); and a consultation on the future of electronic communications.

While the first and the third of these initiatives are progressing, the GCR has not yet been officially adopted.

The Digital Decade report² shows that in several Member States the level of coverage and, especially, of take-up is insufficient to achieve the connectivity targets (fibre-to-the-premises (FTTP) take-up rate of around 14 %). This situation is particularly critical in rural and mountains areas where there is the need to narrow the digital divide and ensure that citizens benefit from very high capacity (VHC) connectivity.

In this regard, the GCR made recommendations on issues such as the 'copper switch-off', the weighted average cost of capital (WACC) and the risk premium that are key for operators, investors and national authorities, which are defining the market analysis for the next five years. However, concerns were raised by the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC)³ regarding the concept of 'prospective competition'.

In view of the above, could the Commission clarify:

1. Whether the risks of premature deregulation raised by BEREC have been duly taken into account and if paragraphs 33 and 34 of the GCR have been revised?
2. When the Commission intends to formally adopt the GCR in order to provide the necessary legal predictability to operators, investors and national regulatory authorities?

Submitted: 8.12.2023

¹ Measures to reduce the cost of deploying gigabit electronic communications networks 2023/0046(COD).

² European Commission, *2023 Report on the state of the Digital Decade*, September 2023.

³ BEREC, *BEREC Opinion on the Draft Gigabit Connectivity Recommendation*, May 2023.