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Answer given by Mr Breton
on behalf of the European Commission
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WiFi4EU connectivity can make an important contribution to ensuring access to the internet during critical times. Due to the outbreak of COVID-19, many municipalities reported difficulties to participate in the call originally planned for 17 March 2020. Suppliers also reported delays, asking for flexibility. In order to give all municipalities equal opportunities, the Commission decided to postpone Call 4 to July 2020 or the autumn of 2020. It is also working to grant additional time for the rollout of networks.

The effects of WiFi4EU in increasing internet access opportunities for the local economy and services to citizens are so far positive. In total, EUR 119.7 million have been committed with the three first calls. About a third of municipalities in Europe registered. In seven countries, the percentage of municipalities with a voucher is above 70%. The Commission remains committed to creating a unique and first-ever roaming platform through a Single Authentication Service and is preparing for its launch in the coming months.

Since the beginning, municipalities can use the WiFi4EU helpdesk, available in all EU languages. The Commission launched several communication campaigns, including webinars to the Broadband Competence Offices (a network of government correspondents), and a phone call campaign to 1200 municipalities. The Futurium platform hosts 1200 WiFi4EU stakeholders, promoting exchanges of best practices. Further actions can be planned in cooperation with the European Parliament and other institutions.