



Digital Single Market: EU negotiators agree on the WiFi4EU initiative

Brussels, 29 May 2017

The European Parliament, the Council and the Commission reached tonight a political agreement on the WiFi4EU initiative and its funding which supports installing free public Wi-Fi hotspots in local communities across the EU: in public squares, piazzas, parks, hospitals and other public spaces.

As [stated by Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker](#), the [WiFi4EU](#) initiative will contribute to the vision of having "every European village and every city with free wireless internet access around the main centres of public life by 2020."

Vice-President in charge of the Digital Single Market Andrus **Ansip** welcomed tonight's agreement and said: "The Digital Single Market strategy aims to build a fully connected Europe where everyone has access to high-quality digital networks. The WiFi4EU initiative will improve connectivity in particular where access to the internet is limited. WiFi4EU is a welcome first step, but much more needs to be done to achieve high-speed connectivity across the whole EU territory – such as improving Europe-wide coordination of spectrum *and stimulating investments in the high-capacity networks that Europe needs.*"

The political agreement includes a commitment by the three institutions to ensure that an overall amount of €120 million shall be assigned to fund equipment for public free Wi-Fi services in 6,000 to 8,000 municipalities in all Member States. The specific sources of the funding will be finalised in the ongoing legislative discussions on the review of the current Multiannual Financial Framework programme. Local authorities will be able to apply for funding once the system is set up.

In practice, local public authorities (municipalities or groups of municipalities) wishing to offer Wi-Fi in areas where a similar public or private offer does not yet exist will be able to apply for funding via a simple and non-bureaucratic process. A grant allocated in the form of vouchers will be used to purchase and install state-of-the-art equipment, i.e. local wireless access points, while the public authority will cover the running costs of the connection itself.

Background

Announced by President Juncker in his [State of the Union Address](#) in September 2016, the WiFi4EU initiative is part of the ambitious [overhaul of EU telecoms rules](#) including new measures to meet Europeans' growing connectivity needs and boost Europe's competitiveness.

The Commission reviewed recently its [Digital Single Market strategy](#) – one of the top priorities of the Juncker Commission – taking stock of the progress made, but also calling on co-legislators to swiftly act on all proposals already presented. The EU has been quick to achieve important agreements on the [end of roaming charges](#) on 15 June 2017 for all travellers in the EU, on the [portability of content](#) which will allow as of early 2018 Europeans to travel with the films, the music, the video games or the e-books they have subscribed to at home or on the [release of the 700 MHz band](#) for the development of 5G and new online services. On remaining proposals, the final outcome is now negotiated in the European Parliament and the Council.

For More Information

Q&A on [WiFi4EU: How will it work?](#)

Website [WiFi4EU initiative](#)

[Factsheet](#) on WiFi4EU

Press release on [Digital Single Market strategy mid-term review](#)

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