

WiFi4EU stories: an interview with the Mayor of Bissen, Luxembourg

The commune of Bissen, located in the canton of Mersch in central Luxembourg, has brought connectivity closer to its citizens by adhering to the WiFi4EU initiative. Following the steps of its capital city, Bissen wants people to benefit from the many opportunities brought about by digitalization, including having equal access to public information.



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Bissen can be described as a town of opposites. A small paradise for lovers of nature in the heart of Luxembourg, it is also home to one of the world's largest steel factory. The town's bucolic landscape, destination for many campers and trekkers, complements its constant need to innovate.



Photo caption: Mayor of Bissen, David Viaggi, holding the WiFi4EU voucher.

It is not by chance that the town is one of Luxembourg's first beneficiary of the EUR 15,000 WiFi4EU voucher, among a total of 30 municipalities. Launching the "Free Wi-Fi Bissen" in December 2020, comprising 60 hotspots scattered around various public centres, the commune has given citizens the opportunity to be connected at all times, significantly improving the quality of public services and making information accessible to all. The installation ensures "we can deliver information much faster" than normal, Mayor David Viaggi told the WiFi4EU team. Indeed, citizens are no longer obliged to wait in line to request papers, and can instead benefit from the comfort of a click made from their own phones, tablets or computers.

Bissen's decision to democratise Wi-Fi comes at a very important moment in time. Not only has the Government Council of Luxembourg just recently approved the country's Electronic Governance strategy for the next five years, putting eGovernment at the forefront, the COVID-19 pandemic has also triggered a sense of urgency in facilitating communication between individuals and public institutions, as well as ensuring that connectivity standards are implemented across Europe. During our interview, Mr Viaggi highlighted that making Bissen a digital municipality is a small, yet important step needed to equalize access to essential parts of public life. More than anything, it is this equalizing factor that makes free, public Wi-Fi so important for his municipality. Hoping that business will slowly go back to normal, Mayor Viaggi also said he expects citizens and tourists to fully enjoy the advantages of the Wi-Fi network this summer. When asked what is to come in Bissen's digital strategy for the near future, he said we can only wait for more promising developments.

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