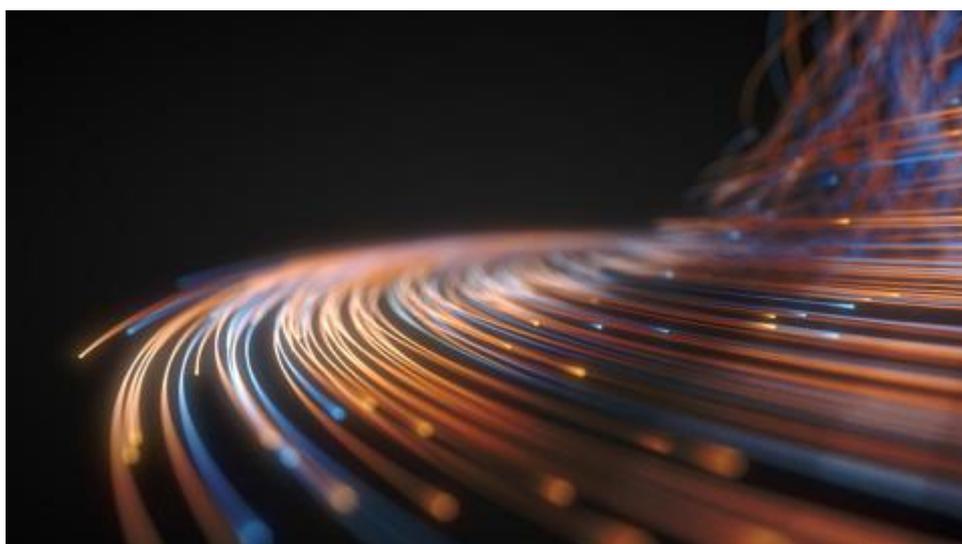


EU rules to reduce cost of high-speed broadband deployment

To make high-speed broadband quickly available, the EU established a set of harmonised measures to lower the cost of rolling out broadband, through the Broadband Cost Reduction Directive.



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Civil engineering, such as the digging up of roads to lay down fibre, and other works necessary to install network infrastructure are costly and involve time-consuming administrative procedures. The Broadband Cost Reduction Directive decreases the cost and contributes to speeding up broadband rollout, by:

- simplifying permit-granting procedures for civil works
- promoting better coordination and greater synergies between civil engineering projects and the different authorities involved
- giving companies a better overview of and access to existing infrastructures, including inside buildings, which could host network elements
- equipping new buildings and major renovations with high-speed physical infrastructures (e.g. mini-ducts, access point)

Efficient permit granting

More efficient and transparent permit granting leads to time savings and, potentially, earlier revenues from services for companies. It lowers barriers to market entry, especially for smaller players, thus supporting competition.

The Directive introduces measures to simplify permit granting and renders it more transparent. Member States shall ensure that all relevant information on conditions and procedures for granting permits for civil works with a view on deploying high-speed communication networks is available via a

Single Information Point.

Member States are encouraged to organise the application for permits by electronic means. In any event, unless national law specifically provides otherwise, any permit decision should be made within four months, save for exceptional circumstances, from the receipt of a complete permit request. Any refusal should be justified based on objective, transparent, non-discriminatory and proportionate criteria.

Coordination of civil works

Stimulating synergies across sectors may significantly reduce the need for civil works and therefore the economic, social and environmental costs involved. The coordination of civil works creates great opportunities for interconnectivity between sectors.

The Directive enables any network operator to negotiate agreements with other infrastructure providers for coordinating civil works with a view to deploying high-speed electronic communication networks.

Additional obligations apply to network operators fully or partly financed by public means: these operators have to meet any reasonable request for coordination of works, provided that it does not entail any additional costs and does not impede control over the coordination of the works.

In order to facilitate coordination, any network operator should make available, upon specific request or via a Single Information Point, the following minimum information related to its on-going or planned civil works:

- the location and type of works,
- the network elements involved,
- the estimated starting date and duration of works, and
- a contact point.

Member States may provide for exemptions from these obligations for civil works of insignificant value or in case of critical infrastructure.

Access to existing physical infrastructure

For companies deploying networks, access to existing physical infrastructure can allow significant savings, up to 60% in some cases, as compared to excavating afresh. owners of existing infrastructure are also expected to benefit, for instance energy utilities exploiting synergies with smart grids deployment. Access to passive infrastructure enhances efficiencies, minimizes the costs and accelerates the deployment of telecommunication infrastructure.

The Directive on measures to reduce the cost of deploying high-speed electronic communications networks allow making use of all relevant and available physical infrastructure for the roll-out of high-speed electronic communication networks.

According to the Directive, network operators (electronic communication, energy utilities, etc.) are to

give access to their physical infrastructure (e.g. ducts, manholes, cabinets, poles) to operators intending to roll out high-speed broadband networks under fair and reasonable terms and conditions.

In order to facilitate access to existing physical infrastructure in a transparent way, public communications network providers have the right to access minimum information, upon request, regarding:

- location and route,
- type and current use of the infrastructure, and
- a contact point.

Member States may allow access to minimum information on existing infrastructure to be limited only if necessary in view of the security of the networks and their integrity, national security, public health or safety, confidentiality or operating and business secrets.

Infrastructure inside buildings

Installing physical infrastructure that enables high-speed internet access is more cost-effective and less disturbing for residents, if done at the time of construction or implementation of major renovation. If the buildings are equipped with the necessary infrastructure, companies can install cables or other active equipment quicker and at significantly lower costs, allowing them to offer their services faster and to more citizens.

The Directive ensures high-speed-ready, accessible in-building physical infrastructure in all newly constructed and majorly renovated buildings.

To achieve this objective, the buildings for which permits are submitted after 31 December 2016 must be equipped with:

- physical infrastructure, such as mini-ducts capable of hosting high-speed networks, and
- an easily accessible access point for the providers of public communications networks who wish to terminate their networks at the premises of the subscriber.

Such buildings shall be eligible to receive the voluntary “broadband-ready” label in Member States where this is available.

Moreover, without prejudice to property rights, every provider of public communications networks shall have the right to access any in-building physical infrastructure under fair and non-discriminatory terms and conditions, if duplication is technically impossible or economically inefficient.

For buildings not equipped with high-speed-ready in-building infrastructure, every public communication network provider can terminate its network at the premises of the subscriber subject to the subscriber's agreement and provided that it minimises the impact on the property of third parties.

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Broadband in EU countries

Find current information on broadband development in each country, as well as national strategies and policies for developing broadband.

Broadband Glossary

This a non-exhaustive list of relevant terms relevant to broadband.

European Broadband Awards: broadband deployment projects

The European Broadband Awards is an event that recognises outstanding broadband deployment projects in Europe and highlights successful infrastructures.

Broadband project planning

The Broadband planning section, along with the Broadband investment guide aids municipalities and other entities in their planning of successful broadband development projects.

Broadband Competence Offices (BCOs) Network

The European Broadband Competence Offices Network supports EU countries in reaching the Gigabit society objectives and rolling out broadband.

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