



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**Brussels, 25 November 2010**

**16836/10**

**TELECOM 138  
COMPET 386**

**NOTE**

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From: COREPER  
To: COUNCIL

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No. Cion com.: 13874/10 TELECOM 92 COMPET 246

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No. prev. doc.: 15701/10 TELECOM 117 COMPET 320

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Subject: European Broadband: investing in digitally driven growth  
- Council Conclusions

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1. On 21 September 2010, the Commission transmitted to the Council a communication entitled "European Broadband: investing in digitally driven growth". This communication is part of the "broadband package" adopted by the Commission as a follow-up to the Digital Agenda for Europe. The other parts of the "broadband package" are the Commission Recommendation Next Generation Access and the Radio Spectrum Policy Programme<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Doc. 13872/10

2. In the communication "European Broadband: investing in digitally driven growth", the Commission sets out a framework for meeting the Digital Agenda's broadband targets. In particular, the communication outlines how best to encourage public and private investment in fast and ultra-fast broadband networks. It calls on EU Member States to introduce operational broadband plans for high and ultra high speed networks with concrete implementing measures. It further provides indications on how public authorities may support broadband investment, including making better use of EU funds. It also announces plans by the European Commission and the European Investment Bank to bring forward broadband finance instruments.

On 24 November 2010, Coreper examined the proposed Draft conclusions and reached an agreement in principal on the annexed text.

The Council is invited to examine the text in view of its adoption.

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**COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON  
EUROPEAN BROADBAND: INVESTING IN DIGITALLY DRIVEN GROWTH**

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

1. WELCOMES

The Commission Communication on European Broadband of 20 September 2010, proposing a number of possible actions in view of meeting the ambitious Europe 2020 broadband targets proposed by the Commission that, by 2020, all Europeans should have access to Internet of above 30 Megabits per second (Mbps) and 50% or more of European households have subscriptions to internet connections above 100 Mbps;<sup>2</sup>

2. TAKES NOTE OF

- a) The proposal from the Commission of 20 September 2010 for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a Radio Spectrum Policy Programme;<sup>3</sup>
- b) The Commission Recommendation of 20 September 2010 on regulated access to Next Generation Access Networks (NGA).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> doc. 13874/10

<sup>3</sup> doc. 13872/10

<sup>4</sup> C(2010) 6223

### 3. RECALLS

- a) The Presidency conclusions of the Brussels European Council of 11-12 December 2008;<sup>5</sup>
- b) The European Council conclusions of 19-20 March 2009;<sup>6</sup>
- c) The Council conclusions of 18 December 2009 on "Post-i2010 Strategy - towards an open, green and competitive knowledge society";<sup>7</sup>
- d) The Commission Communication of 3 March 2010 on "Europe 2020 - A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth";<sup>8</sup>
- e) The Community Guidelines for the application of State aid rules in relation to rapid deployment of broadband networks;<sup>9</sup>
- f) The various Commission decisions on State aid to broadband (2003-2010);<sup>10</sup>
- g) Council Regulation of 25 May 2009 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and on the financing of the common agricultural policy;<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> doc. 17271/1/08 REV 1

<sup>6</sup> doc. 7880/1/09

<sup>7</sup> doc. 17107/09

<sup>8</sup> doc. 7110/10

<sup>9</sup> Communication from the Commission on Community Guidelines for the application of State aid rules in relation to rapid deployment of broadband networks 2009/C 235/04, OJ C 235, 30.9.2009, p.7

<sup>10</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/competition/sectors/telecommunications/broadband\\_decisions.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/competition/sectors/telecommunications/broadband_decisions.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> Council Regulation (EC) No 473/2009 of 25 May 2009 amending Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and Regulation (EC) No 1290/2005 on the financing of the common agricultural policy, OJ L144/3, 9.6.2009

- h) The Granada Ministerial Declaration of 19 April 2010 on the "European Digital Agenda";<sup>12</sup>
- i) "Europe's Digital Competitiveness Report 2010";<sup>13</sup>
- j) The Commission Communication on "A Digital Agenda for Europe";<sup>14</sup>
- k) The Council conclusions of 31 May 2010 on the Digital Agenda for Europe;<sup>15</sup>
- l) The European Council conclusions of 17 June 2010.<sup>16</sup>

#### 4. ACKNOWLEDGES

- a) That all stakeholders in the European Union should work together to ensure that the necessary resources are put in to the development of a digital single market based on high speed internet and interoperable applications in order to use its full potential to raise productivity and generate economic growth and attract investments, create jobs and reinforce its influence at a global level;
- b) That Europe should achieve a competitive market for broadband infrastructure and services that will facilitate investments in an extensive and sustainable high speed infrastructure which is operated transparently and on an open access basis enabling a diversity of new and innovative services for consumers and businesses across the single market;

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<sup>12</sup> [http://www.eu2010.es/export/sites/presidencia/comun/descargas/Ministerios/en\\_declaracion\\_granada.pdf](http://www.eu2010.es/export/sites/presidencia/comun/descargas/Ministerios/en_declaracion_granada.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> doc. 9857/10

<sup>14</sup> doc. 9981/1/10

<sup>15</sup> doc. 10130/10

<sup>16</sup> doc. EUCO 13/10

- c) That mobile, fixed and satellite broadband networks should be facilitated and developed to expand the reach of broadband to the remotest areas and offer an option for ubiquitous access;
- d) That differences exist between Member States in the development of the information society, in particular with regard to broadband networks, as indicated in "Europe's Digital Competitiveness Report 2010";<sup>17</sup>
- e) That efficient investment and competition in next generation broadband networks and services will be important for innovation, consumer choice and for the competitiveness of the European Union;
- f) That the roll-out of high speed infrastructure, where possible, should be based on a market driven and technology neutral approach ;
- g) That Member States together with the European institutions should take concrete steps and actions to raise awareness and thus stimulate broadband take-up.

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<sup>17</sup> doc. 9857/10

5. INVITES THE COMMISSION TO

- a) By 2011, make a proposal, in cooperation with the EIB and in collaboration with the Member States, to support broadband financing without prejudice to the current multiannual financial framework; issue guidance for public authorities on use of EU funds for open broadband access project design and preparation ; adopt investment guidelines on broadband for public authorities to facilitate full absorption of EU funds;
- b) By 2011, help Member States to progress in meeting the national broadband targets embedded in the national plans;
- c) By 2012, complete a review of cost reduction practices adopted at national and local level in order to encourage efficient private investments, such as the coordination of planning and the ~~to~~ setting up of physical infrastructure sharing rules;
- d) By 2013, reinforce and rationalize the use of funding of high-speed broadband through EU instruments (e.g. ERDF, ERDP, EAFRD, TEN, CIP) without prejudice to the current financial framework.

6. INVITES THE MEMBER STATES IN CLOSE COOPERATION WITH THE STAKEHOLDERS TO

- a) Take utmost account of the NGA Recommendation and implement the European Radio Spectrum Policy Programme in a timely manner;
- b) Rapidly implement and enforce effectively the regulatory framework in a consistent and thorough way in order to achieve in Europe a vibrant competition in broadband markets;
- c) Set national broadband targets and adopt operational plans that may take account of the Europe 2020 broadband targets proposed by the Commission, accompanied by concrete implementation measures, where appropriate and depending on fiscal constraints;
- d) Set up an appropriate coordination of planning and set up physical infrastructure sharing practises in order to encourage efficient private investments;
- e) Reduce broadband investment costs at national and regional level to ensure the competitive provision of broadband services by taking appropriate measures, such as making available to relevant market participants relevant information on available passive infrastructures or the drawing up of an inventory.

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