

# NEW GENERATION ACCESS NETWORKS

## BEUC statement on second consultation on draft recommendation

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**Contact:** Emilie Barrau & Lucia Mora – [digital@beuc.eu](mailto:digital@beuc.eu)  
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BEUC, the European Consumers' Organisation  
80 rue d'Arlon, 1040 Bruxelles - +32 2 743 15 90 - [www.beuc.eu](http://www.beuc.eu)

BEUC, the European Consumers' Organisation, welcomes this second public consultation on a revised draft of the Recommendation on regulated access to Next Generation Access networks (NGA).

BEUC believes that the rolling out of new generation networks could have an interesting impact on competition in the telecom sector and ultimately on consumers. The development of optical fibre in this sector is crucial for the telecom market. It is therefore important that competition is stressed right from the very beginning of the fibre roll-out phase.

BEUC calls for the draft recommendation to fully encompass the following aspects:

#### **Consumer choice**

One of the reasons for the roll-out of new generation access networks is the increase in consumer demand for broadband services. It is important for consumers to have this market developed, but it is equally important for consumers to have a choice.

BEUC favours effectively regulated telecoms markets to ensure that consumers have a choice. If fair access by new operators to the new generation access networks is not effectively achieved, the quality of retail service choices for consumers will be distorted or limited. We call on policy makers, given the oligopolistic structure of the telecom market, to use the roll out to come in order to enhance genuine consumer choice

#### **Competition**

For competition to be effective, access to the network should be made at affordable prices, cost-based, on a transparent basis and discriminatory practices should be forbidden between operators or co-investors.

The stated objectives of the draft recommendation are "promoting investment, competition and innovation with regard to NGA". In order to achieve a successful roll out of new generation access networks the following criteria should always be applied:

1. **All competitors** should have access to the infrastructure under **fair conditions**. It is equally true when the infrastructure has been financed by two operators.
2. Ensure access to networks for new entrants and incumbents at **reasonable prices** (i.e. cost-based).
3. **Transparent conditions** at wholesale and at retail levels; this includes that operators should make information available on the infrastructure they own.
4. Ensure wholesale broadband access is provided on a **non-discriminatory basis** which must ensure that the quality of service provided to wholesale service providers is the same as that of the owner and operator of the network.
5. Ensure **maximum geographical coverage**.
6. Ensure that **no agreement between operators** takes place **at the detriment of other market players**.

### **Role of regulators**

It is crucial to have a strict regulatory overview. BEUC has called consistently for increasing the powers of the national regulators in the telecom sector.

Therefore, BEUC invites the European Commission to reconsider the draft recommendation in line with the above to ensure it will promote effective competition that, ultimately, may benefit consumers.

END