The European Commission proposes over €9 billion for broadband and digital infrastructure services

The European Commission has proposed to spend almost €9.2 billion from 2014 to 2020 on pan-European projects to give EU citizens and businesses access to high-speed broadband networks and the services that run on them.

The 9.2 billion funding is part of the proposed €50 billion plan "Connecting Europe Facility". This would be a completely new digital infrastructure investment programme helping to make everyone a citizen of Digital Europe, to boost the innovation economy and to invest in jobs for the future.

Europe is facing problems in deploying broadband which is a barrier to growth. €7 billion of the proposed €9.2 billion euro would first be invested in high-speed broadband infrastructure. The Commission estimates that this sum could leverage between €50 and 100 billion of public and private investments, i.e. a substantial proportion of the estimated €270 billion of broadband investments needed to meet the Digital Agenda targets.

The remaining €2 billion funding would be invested in the joined-up infrastructure needed for pan-European digital public services. The digital service infrastructure projects would be selected for CEF grants by the Commission from proposals received in areas as setting up a business, authenticating identity and delivering government or health services. Projects will be evaluated on their ability to contribute to a digital single market.

The investments would be used to promote pan-European interoperability and to meet the costs of linking existing national infrastructures and of running dedicated European-level infrastructures. Ensuring interoperability between systems and avoiding fragmentation corresponds to the needs of an increasingly mobile population.

The Commission's proposals will now be submitted to the European Parliament and the EU's Council of Ministers for adoption.

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