



Commission welcomes political agreement to launch IRIS², the Union's Secure Connectivity Programme

Brussels, 17 November 2022

The Commission welcomes the political agreement reached today between the European Parliament and EU Member States on the Union Secure Connectivity Programme 2023-2027 with a budget of €2.4 billion. The programme aims at deploying an EU satellite constellation, to be called 'IRIS²' (Infrastructure for Resilience, Interconnectivity and Security by Satellite). Negotiations have now concluded, paving the way for final approval of the legal text by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union.

The functioning of our economy and our security is increasingly dependent on secure and resilient connectivity. It is paramount for Europe to develop a sovereign, autonomous and secured connectivity infrastructure.

Digital hyper-connectivity and technological transformation prompt an unprecedented increase of demand for services dependent on edge technologies. Both governmental needs and satellite communication solutions are changing rapidly. Satellite based connectivity through Low earth orbit will also enable Europe to provide ultra-secured connectivity to armed forces. The EU space-based secure communication system seeks to meet these increased and evolving needs and ensure guaranteed access in an unrestricted manner, by avoiding dependencies on third-countries and reinforcing the resilience of our value chains. It will include the latest quantum communication technologies for secure encryption by integrating the European Quantum Communication Infrastructure ([EuroQCI](#)). It will be based on the development of innovative and disruptive technologies and on the leveraging of the New Space ecosystem.

Next Steps

The political agreement reached by the European Parliament, Council and Commission is now subject to formal approval by the European Parliament and the Council.

The Commission will soon present several implementing acts, as set out in the Programme Regulation. In parallel, the Commission is working on preparing the tender specifications for setting up swiftly the Secure Connectivity system.

Background

The proposal for a Union Secure Connectivity Programme 2023-2027, presented on 15 February 2022, is the EU's third space flagship programme, after Galileo and Copernicus.

The objective of the programme is:

- To establish a sovereign space-based secure connectivity system for the provision of secure, autonomous, reliable and cost-effective satellite governmental communication services to governmental users supporting the protection of critical infrastructures, surveillance, external actions, crisis management and applications that are critical for the economy, environment, security and defence; and
- To enable the provision of commercial services by the private sector to facilitate, among others, further development of worldwide high-speed broadband, and seamless connectivity including in communication dead zones and increasing cohesion across Member States' territories, thus contributing to fulfilling the objectives set in [Europe's Digital Decade](#) targets.

The Programme will boost the competitiveness of EU industry, including SMEs and start-ups, in the field of satellite communication solutions and services by spearheading innovation to ensure that technological advances and their governmental use act as a driver of innovation and wider commercialisation.

For More Information

[Proposal for a Regulation establishing the Union Secure Connectivity Programme for the period 2023-2027](#)

[EU Space-based Secure Connectivity System](#)

[Factsheet](#)

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Members of the college said:

Secure and efficient connectivity will play a key role in Europe's digital transformation and make us more competitive. Through this Programme, the EU will be at the forefront of secure satellite communication, as it is today with Galileo for satellite navigation and with Copernicus for earth observation.

I welcome the swift conclusion of the negotiations only nine months after the Commission proposal. The recent events in Ukraine have shown how essential it is to have efficient connectivity at all times. With the agreement reached today, we are taking an important step in increasing our resilience and sovereignty, delivering high-speed internet access through a multi-orbital system and providing connectivity to the whole of Europe and Africa. It will allow our many start-ups and Europe as a whole to be at the forefront of technological innovation.

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