



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 26.1.2017
C(2017) 273 final*

Dear President

The Commission would like to thank the Senat for its Opinion on the proposed Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulations (EU) No 1316/2013 and (EU) No 283/2014 as regards the promotion of Internet connectivity in local communities {COM(2016) 589 final}.

This proposal forms part of a broader package of ambitious policy and regulatory measures – the so-called "connectivity package" – designed to foster the necessary internet connectivity throughout the Digital Single Market towards a European Gigabit society by 2025.

With this WiFi4EU initiative, the Commission proposes to support interested local authorities in providing free Wi-Fi connections to their citizens, for example, in and around public buildings, health centres, parks or squares. These access points will offer all European citizens a sense of what future connectivity feels like and a platform to help local authorities make innovative digital services available to the public. The Commission also intends to introduce functionalities enabling any citizen who has registered in one WiFi4EU hotspot to be able to connect to any other WiFi4EU hotspot in Europe.

The Commission is pleased that the Senat shares the view that action at the EU level as envisaged in the proposal will help to accelerate investments in trans-European networks and to mobilise public and private funding for connectivity in Europe, in line with the principles of interoperability, sustainability, and future proof infrastructures.

Discussions between the Commission and the European co-legislators concerning the proposal are now under way and the Commission remains hopeful that an agreement will be reached in the near future so that the scheme can start its operation in the course of next year.

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The Commission fully supports Romania's integrated and proactive approach towards the development of digital infrastructure, as expressed among others in the Next Generation Network National Development Plan, and encourages synergetic efforts between this plan and the WiFi4EU initiative.

The Commission looks forward to continuing its political dialogue with the Senat in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President*

*Andrius Ansip
Vice-President*