Digital Single Market

Universal Service

Team responsible
DG CONNECT [1]

The universal service rules ensure that every user can access basic communications services at a reasonable quality and an affordable price, even if the market would not provide it.

The Universal Service Directive [2] covers the following areas:

- Basic communication services such as making a phone call from a fixed location at an affordable price or receiving national and international calls over a fixed connection;
- Making emergency calls such as to the '112' European emergency number in any EU country free of charge from any telephone, including public payphones;
- Every EU country must make available to customers a comprehensive telephone directory of all subscribers;
- Access to the publicly available telephone services to all, including people with special needs or low income, who may receive direct support pubilc authorities.
- A sufficient number of payphones are available in public areas.

Compliance is ensured in two ways:

- National regulatory authorities (NRAs) [3] monitor the evolution of services and of retail prices and may take measures when deemed necessary.
- The European Commission can take legal action against a Member State that infringes any EU law, including the Universal Service Directive [2].

The Commission regualrly consults with EU Member States, the European Parliament, the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC) [4] and other stakeholders. As part of its regular review of the the scope of the EU universal service rules (see [2005](2005) [5]/[2006](2006) [6] and [2008](2008) [7] reviews), the European Commission concluded [8] in 2011 (see the public consultation [9]) that there was no need to change the basic principles or scope of the rules or to include mobile telecommunications services or broadband connections at EU level.

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