

Press release

11 December 2024

BEREC analyses progress towards copper switch-off, physical infrastructure access and the impact of sharing on sustainability

At the last BEREC plenary meeting of 2024, the Board of Regulators approved three documents for public consultation. These documents address the status of and challenges related to copper switch-off in Europe, regulatory approaches to physical infrastructure access, and an exploration of how sharing electronic communications networks infrastructure and services impacts environmental targets and the role of regulation in this context.

Copper switch-off progress in Europe

The switch-off of copper networks by Significant Market Power (SMP) operators is an important ongoing process that requires careful management to safeguard competition and protect end-user rights. In the [draft progress report](#), BEREC points out that the number of countries where the NRA has set rules for the transition process has increased, as did the number of countries where legacy network elements have already been closed. The key actions that NRAs have undertaken to facilitate migration and copper switch-off, concern the implementation of an appropriate notice period; ensuring the availability of adequate alternative wholesale access products, and efforts around communication with the end-users.

The European Commission's [White Paper on How to Master Europe's Digital Infrastructure Needs?](#) sets uniform targets for all Member States that may be overly ambitious, as some countries face greater challenges than others, including a lack of sufficient civil engineering infrastructure and weather conditions. The report shows that currently only 8 EU Member states are on a migration and switch-off path that would lead to an expected switch-off by 2030. The report further stresses the need for an appropriate level of end-user protection, which requires to foresee adequate notice periods, end-user information and the availability of adequate alternative access products at a comparable price.

The draft progress report is open to public consultation, and BEREC invites stakeholders to submit their views by **31 January 2025**.

Physical infrastructure access regulation

As the digital decade targets drive the rapid deployment of Gigabit networks, physical infrastructure is gaining increasing importance in supporting the provision of future-proof digital services and high-performance, safe communications networks. In the recent [draft report](#), BEREC conducted a comprehensive data collection exercise targeted at providing insights into the NRAs' market notifications regarding access to physical infrastructure.

BEREC's interest was focused, among others, on the role that non-telecom owners of physical infrastructure play for the completeness of the market reviews, the approach towards physical infrastructure elements regulation from an *ex ante* procedural standpoint, as well as on the mix of the remedies imposed when SMP was found. Additionally, the draft report explores the interplay between asymmetric and symmetric access obligations with a bearing on physical infrastructure access, reflecting on regulatory approaches, motivations and expected future developments. The key findings and recommendations of the document are now available for public consultation until **19 February 2025**.

[Infrastructure sharing promotes sustainability](#)

During the last plenary meeting, the Board of Regulators approved the [draft report](#) for public consultation, which examines the impact of infrastructure sharing on the sustainability of electronic communications networks and services (ECN/ECS) and the regulatory role in promoting these practices. The document outlines the implementation and transposition of EU provisions related to network and infrastructure sharing across Member States, focusing on infrastructure sharing, co-location and environmental considerations. It highlights the need for NRAs to assess the environmental benefits of network sharing and to make decisions that promote sustainability. Consistent with the past publications of BEREC, it also underlines the need to weigh the benefits of infrastructure sharing against possible technical and legal issues, especially on competition. While commercially driven sharing agreements and EU regulatory tools exist to encourage the latter, many Member States still need to fully utilise them. The report outlines that the inclusion of environmental sustainability targets in the EU regulatory framework will empower NRAs to future integrate environmental aspects in their decisions related to infrastructure sharing. BEREC also suggests the next examination of EECC could be the opportunity to consider expanding the possibilities for regulators to encourage infrastructure sharing and its environmental benefits, especially in mobile network. Finally, it calls for improved data and best practices exchange to support more sustainable and efficient infrastructure sharing. The public consultation will be open until **26 January 2025**.

[Public documents available online](#)

A complete list of [BEREC's public documents](#) adopted during its 61st ordinary meeting of 5–6 December 2024 is available on the BEREC website. Additional to the abovementioned, the documents are as follows:

- [BEREC Work Programme for 2025](#),
- [Report on the IP interconnection ecosystem](#),
- [Opinion on market and technological developments and their impact on end-user rights under the EECC](#),
- [Report on Connectivity Indicators for the Digital Decade Policy Programme \(DDPP\)](#),
- [Opinion on the methodology for mapping Quality of Service coverage for the DDPP](#),

Stay in touch

berec.europa.eu

 [Twitter/X](#)

 [LinkedIn](#)

 [YouTube](#)



- [Opinion on the implementation and functioning of the general authorisation regime](#),
- [Report on M2M and permanent roaming](#),
- [Regulatory Accounting in Practice Report 2024](#).

Note to Editor

BEREC promotes openness and transparency in its communications and is available for any further questions you may have. BEREC is also ready to assist you in discovering other topics within our remit; please reach out to us via: communications@berec.europa.eu.



Stay in touch

berec.europa.eu

 [Twitter/X](#)

 [LinkedIn](#)

 [YouTube](#)