

# Digital Infrastructures of Tomorrow

The European Commission is proposing a multi-pronged approach to boost innovation, security, and resilience in digital infrastructure. This strategy is crucial for Europe's future competitiveness as advanced networks underpin key technologies such as telemedicine, automated driving, predictive maintenance of buildings, and precision agriculture.

### **The proposed package includes:**

A White Paper titled "How to master Europe's digital infrastructure needs?", which delves into current challenges hindering the deployment of future-proof connectivity networks. The Paper refers to three main pillars: Creating the '3C Network", completing the Digital Single Market, and securing a resilient digital infrastructure in Europe. It aims to achieve this by proposing various scenarios to attract investment, stimulate innovation, enhance security, and achieve a unified Digital Single Market.

In order to foster collaborative innovation, the White Paper proposes the creation of a "Connected Collaborative Computing Network" (3C Network). This network would establish end-to-end integrated infrastructure and platforms for cloud and edge computing services, while serving as a springboard for developing innovative technologies and AI applications across diverse sectors.

The plan also emphasises the maximisation of synergies between existing programs like the [Next Generation Cloud Infrastructure and Services](#) (IPCEI), and funding instruments like the [Connecting Europe Facility](#) and [Digital Europe](#). A potential coordinating role is envisioned for the [Smart Networks and Services Joint Undertaking](#) (SNS JU) to facilitate the development of a collaborative connectivity and computing ecosystem.

The Commission acknowledges the convergence between telecom and cloud technologies, currently subject to distinct regulatory frameworks. The package proposes a review to ensure a level playing field and facilitate investment in digital infrastructure. This could involve a more harmonized approach for telecom operator authorization procedures, integrated Union-level spectrum governance, and adjustments to wholesale access policies.

The plan explores options to expedite the transition from legacy copper networks to fiber-optic infrastructure by 2030, which would significantly enhance network capacity and speed. Simultaneously, the EU emphasises the need of "greening" digital networks by improving their energy efficiency.

Recognizing the critical role of submarine cables, the package proposes measures to incentivize their deployment and bolster their security and resilience. Building upon the accompanying recommendation, the strategy envisions a joint EU governance system for the long term. It also explores reviewing existing instruments to attract private investment for Cable Projects of European Interest (CPEIs).

In response to urgent stakeholder concerns, the package proposes immediate actions to **improve internal EU coordination** regarding submarine cable security. This includes assessing and mitigating security risks, establishing a "**Cable Security Toolbox**" with essential resources, and streamlining permit granting procedures. Furthermore, a Submarine Cable Infrastructure Expert Group, comprised of member state authorities, is being formed to support the implementation of these recommendations.

The consultation for the White Paper will close on 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2024.

## Recent Parallel EU Initiatives

In recent years, the EU has actively sought to modernise its digital infrastructure and EU-wide connectivity through numerous initiatives such as the [Gigabit Infrastructure Act](#) (GIA). The GIA introduced an action-plan to streamline and boost the development and deployment of advanced digital networks to reduce administrative burdens and expenses.

Simultaneously, the EU adopted the [Gigabit Recommendation](#), which guides national regulators in promoting gigabit connectivity through targeted regulations.

Key connectivity and the improvement of digital and logistical infrastructures is also being achieved by means of the EU's [Global Gateways Partnerships](#). This initiative focuses on high-quality and sustainable connectivity spanning the entire EU territory, especially remote or isolated areas, or islands, by channelling funding from the CEF.

### Links to more information:

[https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP\\_24\\_941](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_24_941)

<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/news/commission-presents-new-initiatives-digital-infrastructures-tomorrow>

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