



PRESS RELEASE

The European Local Fibre Alliance (ELFA) welcomes the European Commission’s Digital Compass and its goal to bring gigabit connectivity to all sustainable digital infrastructures by 2030. The compass points to full fibre networks - which not only is the most future-proof technology at gigabit level, but also the most energy-efficient. It is pivotal that policy-makers have a strong commitment to promoting investments in full fibre networks in both urban and rural areas across Europe in the years to come.

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ELFA, the joint voice of European local fibre operators, embraces the European Commission’s new cardinal points for connectivity. These pioneering targets – include the key objective that *by 2030, all EU households should have gigabit connectivity and all populated areas should be covered by 5G.*

The European fibre associations represented in ELFA support the Commission’s determination that fast and secure connectivity for everybody and everywhere in Europe is a prerequisite for a society in which every business and citizen can fully participate. According to the Commission’s strategy on the digital decade, new electronic communication technologies are expected to provide a whole new perspective to a digitally enabled society, underpinning the need for gigabit connectivity.

Moreover, ELFA fully shares the Commission’s ambition to accelerate the deployment of fibre networks in order to usher in a new European age of gigabit connectivity. That being said, as industry leaders, we believe that Europe needs imminent progress to facilitate fibre roll-out through streamlined measures and processes, which cannot wait until the end of the decade in order to maintain the positive trajectory. The coronavirus pandemic has shown the importance of high-speed connectivity, given our society’s increased reliance on digital services, including among others, video-based teleworking, home-schooling and remote healthcare. We are further convinced that full fibre networks should reach all citizens and businesses in both urban and rural areas – just like electricity, water supply and roads.

Considering that full fibre networks are the most sustainable of all telecommunication infrastructures, they are a prerequisite to achieving the European Green Deal, helping to deliver a greener digital economy. Numerous scientific studies have shown that full fibre networks can drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions other communication technologies. According to a recent analysis carried out by WIK-Consult on behalf of Stokab, a Swedish open network provider owned by the City of Stockholm, a complete migration from the current technology mix in the EU (mainly DSL and cable) to full fibre networks (PtP and PON) would reduce power consumption from 52,608 GWh to 10,857 GWh. In terms of CO2 emissions, this would mean a reduction from 15.5



million tonnes of CO2 to only 3.2, thereby achieving a 79% reduction) under the current power generation mix.

Beyond enabling access to high-speed internet, fibre networks allow public authorities and cities to make a step towards sustainable and environmentally friendly public investments with innovative smart territory projects. Moreover, full fibre networks are indispensable for 5G coverage, thereby strengthening the energy efficient character of 5G technologies.

ELFA fully supports the Commission's decision, within the framework of the Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI), to measure the energy efficiency of data centres and electronic communications networks used by European operators. ELFA welcomes that several national governments, regulatory authorities and BEREC are currently working to build common methodologies and indicators to assess the sector's environmental impact and to collect robust and relevant data.

In view of the vital role that full fibre networks will play in achieving the European Green Deal, ELFA urges policy-makers to take due account of environmental costs and benefits when developing new regulation and recommendations concerning broadband. Facilitating the transition from copper (DSL) and cable infrastructures to full fibre (FTTH) could significantly reduce the carbon footprint of the telecom sector in Europe while supporting gigabit connectivity.

Together with European policy-makers, ELFA stands ready to do its part in bringing fibre connectivity to all households and businesses across Europe. A strong full fibre policy commitment will be the foundation upon which green and digital transformation can be achieved, and the Commission's 2030 targets are an important milestone towards fulfilling the promise of the gigabit society.

About ELFA

[ELFA, the European Local Fibre Alliance](#), is the shared voice from alternative private and public local fibre operators in the EU. ELFA has been founded to call for a more ambitious European Digital agenda and the acceleration of fibre deployment in Europe to power very high capacity networks (VHCN) to citizens and businesses. Our vision is to create sustainable fibre-based infrastructure in both urban and rural areas across Europe. Members support open access business models and technology neutral access networks.

