

Committed to Europe



The European Electronic Communications Code

New regulatory objectives for a new digital era

For Orange, the regulatory objectives formalised in the draft European Electronic Communications Code (EECC) are essential as they provide guidance for all regulatory decisions linked to the telecom sector. With the achievement of the transition from traditional monopolistic telecommunications markets to a genuinely competitive digital environment, regulation needs to adapt accordingly. In this context, Orange welcomes the new EECC objective to promote the availability and take up of “Very High Capacity” (VHC) connectivity. Redressing the investment gap the EU is facing in new infrastructure will be crucial to achieve the Gigabit Society objectives for 2025.

Beyond the objective above, Orange believes that putting Europe and its European electronic communications industry back in the driving seat should also be a major preoccupation in all future decisions. The EECC should therefore include another objective linked to the competitiveness of the EU electronic communications industry. The 5G Action Plan, where competitiveness and the ambition to regain technological leadership are at the centre of the proposal, offers good precedent.

Orange supports the new regulatory objectives of the EECC

The changes made to Article 3.2 in the EECC are in Orange’s view very positive. In light of increased competition at network level, continued data increase and diversity of citizens’ needs (e.g. basic access to the Internet, very high quality for new services like e-health services, or future connected cars) refocusing EU regulation to promote access to and the take-off of fixed and mobile VHC connectivity by all EU citizens and businesses is the right approach. To deliver the promise of the Digital Single Market, the need for the enforcement of common and predictable rules, an efficient and coordinated use of spectrum and open innovation is fully justified. Finally, Orange also supports the objective to promote the current and long term interests of EU citizens.

With those objectives, the decisions of regulatory authorities should enable investment in VHC networks contributing to the Gigabit Society while supporting other key goals such as competition, the Digital Single Market and citizens’ interests.

Orange however calls for a further adaptation necessary to support the EU competitiveness

To put Europe back in the driving seat, Orange believes the EECC should also include a new objective relating to the competitiveness of European industry. Such an objective would support the success of European firms as worldwide technology leaders, thereby maximizing the contribution of the electronic communications sector to wealth creation in the EU to the benefit of citizens as consumers and as producers.

This objective will in Orange’s view also ensure that regulators fully support the fast adoption of cutting edge solutions in Europe. It could influence regulatory decisions aimed at combining investments incentives and customer take-up. For instance, when regulators auction spectrum to mobile operators, maximising their auction revenues, this would stretch the financial capabilities of operators to invest in network coverage, and ultimately hinder customer take-up. This is an option that is compatible with the current regulatory objectives. With the proposed new objective, regulators would be also encouraged to consider the industry’s capability to meet the gigabit challenge.

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