



PRESS RELEASE

The European Local Fibre Alliance (ELFA) meets with representatives from the European Parliament and European Commission to call for a stronger fibre policy commitment to make full fibre networks a reality for all European citizens, businesses and public administrations and 5G.

Brussels, 21 November 2019 –

ELFA, the European voice of local fibre operators, strengthened its demand to European policy makers for a clear definition of VHC networks, that is at least fibre to the building. With only days left until the new Commission takes office, ELFA would welcome a strong positioning of fibre technology in the upcoming digital infrastructure policies. It is apparent that only full fibre networks will reliably transmit the bandwidths necessary for future applications such as automated driving, A.I. and 5G.

Furthermore, the need for full fibre networks across Europe will steadily increase with the planned roll-out of 5G technology. In fact, two thirds of the investments in 5G solutions will be based on necessary fibre infrastructure. For this reason, ELFA-members are convinced that fibre is the necessary precondition of a 5G-rollout. Both technologies are complementary rather than 5G being a substitute for fibre access to the building. The current status of the spectrum allocation was also on the agenda of yesterday's ELFA-meeting with representatives of the European Parliament and the Commission in addition to market structures, investments and FttB/H market shares.

The alternative operators represented in ELFA carry the lion's share of the FttB/H rollout in their respective countries, i.e. Sweden, Denmark, Germany, UK, France and Austria. Hence, ELFA members and other competitors, are responsible for about half of the total invest into fixed-line telecommunication networks. Thus, they drive innovation and competition in the respective markets.

Another important topic of ELFA's policy meeting was the potential of sustainable full fibre networks for tackling climate change. Full fibre networks can reduce carbon emissions caused by transportation and traffic by enabling teleworking opportunities, videoconferencing or telemedicine. This is in line with the new Commission President's commitment to make all policy dimensions fit for the digital age.

ELFA members also proposed their ideas to accelerate full fibre deployment. Among the proposed solutions were policy measures which focus on the demand-side, in the form of a reduced value added tax for telecommunication services or the introduction of a voucher model, which aims at channelling funds to the demand of citizens and businesses. Furthermore, new solutions concerning the efficient use of the limited civil engineering capacities and skilled employees were introduced. Finally, the potentials of Open Access were addressed in terms of mutual wholesale/wholebuy agreements to raise network capacity use and to avoid parallel network deployment and overbuilding.



The EUROPEAN LOCAL FIBRE ALLIANCE (ELFA) is the shared voice from alternative public and private local fibre operators calling for an ambitious European Digital agenda including the acceleration of fibre deployment in Europe to power very high capacity (VHC) networks. ELFA finds that competition is a key driver of higher investments in fibre networks in Europe and provides the greatest benefits for European citizens and businesses.

About ELFA:

- Our vision is to create sustainable fibre-based infrastructures in both urban and rural areas across Europe
- Members are committed to the use of these infrastructures for the economic and social development of communities for the benefit of European citizens and businesses

Members of ELFA take part in many of more than 300 fibre projects in Europe covering over 50 million households and 20 million connections (IDATE, 2016).

More information: www.e-lfa.eu

