

PRESS RELEASE

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Director of DG CNECT underlines importance of wireless infrastructure to Digital Decade success

BRUSSELS, OCT 24 – Europe will need significant innovation and investments in 5G and infrastructure, according to **Roberto Viola, Director General of DG CNECT**, who spoke at the European Wireless Infrastructure Association’s (EWIA) annual event in Brussels on 13 October.

This event gathered representatives from the European Wireless Infrastructure Association (EWIA), the European institutions and Telecom Industry leaders to discuss how to accelerate the EU into the Digital Decade.

Noting that "the world is going to micro-cells", **Mr Viola** contrasted the leadership role achieved by European manufacturers in 5G with "the number of native 5G sites [which remains] extremely low compared to other regions in the world". He invited participants to identify bottlenecks, which the Commission is determined to help overcome, adding: "Every red tape is an impediment towards a better society".

Wireless infrastructure plays a key role in the Commission’s target of a ‘Gigabit for everyone, 5G everywhere’. **Tobias Martinez Gimeno, EWIA's Chairman** and CEO of wireless telecoms infrastructure and services company Cellnex, said: ‘Connectivity and digital services should be a key strategic lever to overcome these complicated times. We welcome the job already done by policy makers on setting the targets for the Digital Decade and establishing the regulatory framework to achieve them. We have the European Code of Electronic Communications, which has provided a shared “mental frame” for all Member States, which are finalizing its transposition to their respective national legislation. We have a shared target. In 2030, 5G is to be available everywhere at all times. And by then, and if we want to keep our competitive stance, we will have to be prepared and ready for the next generation, 6G, and in an advanced stage regarding quantum communications.’

Mr. Martinez also called to “Discuss how we can provide better connections to EU citizens, how we can help businesses to become more competitive, and what we can do so Europe is not lagging behind other regions like Asia or North America.”

In response, **ETNO’s Senior Director of Regulatory Affairs Maarit Palovirta, Ulrich Loewer, partner at EY-Parthenon, Phoenix Tower International’s General Counsel for Europe Marianna Vignapiano, General Secretary of TDF Arnaud Lucaussy, and Head of Legal for ATC Germany Torsten Kreitlow** shared their views on how to achieve full 5G coverage in populated areas, which factors in EU Member States support or inhibit 5G rollout, and what the European Commission’s upcoming Connectivity Infrastructure Act could look like.

Illustrating the leverage of digitization also on public governance, **MEP Jordi Solé of the Greens/EFA** recalled how the Parliament switched to full online mode in just a few weeks when the pandemic broke out. Even though “5G rollout has been taking place at too slow a pace”, the shadow rapporteur of the Greens/EFA for the Digital Decade expressed confidence that “5G will enhance the competitiveness of our economy and of the EU as a whole”. “The twin digital and green transition truly go hand in hand” as the Telecom industry can become a “reliable partner” in achieving the green transition.

ABOUT EWIA

The European Wireless Infrastructure Association is the European trade association of wholesale wireless infrastructure providers. Our members invest in and operate wireless infrastructure essential to the delivery of mobile voice, wireless broadband and other wireless networks.

EWIA advocates policies that encourage the network infrastructure investment and deployment necessary to make advanced wireless broadband available everywhere for consumers, businesses, health care, public safety and the countless other sectors that rely on always-on wireless connections.

If you would like to find out more about EWIA and our activities, please contact ewiasecretariat@grayling.com or visit us as ewia.org, Twitter and LinkedIn.