

Commissioner Gabriel congratulates the first 2,800 municipalities granted WiFi4EU vouchers

Today the European Commission announced the results of the first [WiFi4EU](#) call for proposals, which ran on 7-9 November. 2,800 municipalities were selected to receive a WiFi4EU voucher worth €15,000. The total budget of this call was €42 million. The selected municipalities will be able to set up Wi-Fi hotspots in public spaces, such as town halls, libraries, museums, parks, squares and other places of public interest.

Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society Mariya **Gabriel** welcomed the announcement in the following statement:

“Thanks to the first WiFi4EU call, 2,800 municipalities will be able to give thousands of Europeans and visitors free internet access in public spaces across the EU, bringing connectivity closer to citizens in their day-to-day lives. Those municipalities are located in all corners of Europe.

Improving connectivity in the EU is a key part of our Digital Single Market strategy, and WiFi4EU is another concrete step to make it a reality for everyone. It will bring many more Europeans online for free, enabling them to enjoy better communications and new opportunities to connect that will ultimately strengthen our EU society and economy.

The recently approved new rules establishing the European Electronic Communications Code and the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC) will ensure faster access to radio spectrum and will boost investment in high-speed and high-quality networks everywhere in Europe, including in remote areas. WiFi4EU comes in addition to these EU-wide efforts aiming to make connectivity universal.

Our goal is that citizens and businesses all over Europe will be better protected and enjoy access to affordable communications services, including internet access for services such as eGovernment, eHealth, online banking, video calls and many more. And we will achieve it!”

Next steps

Following today’s announcement, the [Innovation and Networks Executive Agency](#) (INEA), the Commission’s executive agency in charge of implementing the WiFi4EU scheme, will now invite voucher winning municipalities to sign grant agreements. As soon as this is completed, selected municipalities will be able to contract a Wi-Fi company that will install the WiFi4EU hotspots in public spaces and then to redeem the voucher. All 2,800 WiFi4EU hotspots will be free of charge and operate for at least three years.

There will be three further calls for which municipalities that did not

receive a voucher this time can apply. The second call will be launched at the beginning of 2019. In total, around 8,000 municipalities will be able to benefit from this scheme between now and 2020.

In the meantime, all registered municipalities can join the dedicated [WiFi4EU Community](#) to give feedback on the initiative, engage with municipalities from all over Europe, and receive updates about the WiFi4EU programme.

Background

Announced by President Juncker in his [State of the Union address](#) in September 2016, the WiFi4EU initiative is part of the ambitious [overhaul of EU telecoms rules](#), including new measures to meet Europeans' growing connectivity needs and boost Europe's competitiveness.

The first [WiFi4EU call for proposals](#) was launched on 7 November at 13:00 (CET) and closed on 9 November at 17:00 (CET). The call proved to be very popular, with over 13,000 applications from all participating countries. Three more WiFi4EU calls will be organised in the coming two years. For all four calls, the Commission is making available a total of €120 million for up to 8,000 municipalities across the EU. The Commission selects municipalities on a "first-come, first-served" basis.

WiFi4EU-funded networks will be free of charge, free of advertising, and free of personal data harvesting. Funding will be provided for networks that do not duplicate existing free private or public services of a similar quality. Municipalities will contract WiFi installation companies and will be responsible for the set-up and maintenance of the WiFi hotspots.

For more information

More details on the first WiFi4EU call for proposals are available [here](#).

More general information on the initiative is available [here](#) and in the [factsheet](#).