Statement by Commissioner Gabriel on the first call for applications for WiFi4EU vouchers

Commissioner Mariya Gabriel, in charge of the Digital Economy and Society, issued a statement following the cancellation of the first call for applications for free Wi-Fi vouchers:

"In March 2018, the European Commission opened the WiFi4EU portal (www.wifi4eu.eu) to install free public Wi-Fi hotspots in public squares, libraries, town halls or other places of public interest.

The programme generated an enormous amount of interest. In less than two months, more than 18,000 municipalities, around a quarter of all in Europe, expressed their interest. A first call for applications was launched on 15 May 2018. Within seconds, over 5,000 municipalities had already applied and, within a few hours, 11,000 had done so. However, after a few hours we had to close the WiFi4EU portal in response to information received from a third party about a technical issue.

During the investigation, the Commission identified a flaw in the software supplied by contractors. This issue allowed some municipalities to apply in good faith before the call was opened, while it prevented others from doing so once the call had opened.

The Commission is strongly attached to the principles of fairness, transparency and reliability. Therefore, as this technical issue prevented all municipalities from applying on an equal basis, I have asked my services to cancel this first call. The vouchers from this first round of applications will be added to the budget for the next call.

As of today we are informing all municipalities registered on the portal of this decision. Their registrations will remain valid for future calls, so municipalities can apply again with one click of a button. Those that have not yet registered on the portal will be able to do so when it re-opens before the next call in autumn 2018, once the IT problems have been fully resolved.

The allocation of the first vouchers was already planned to take place after the summer, therefore the current issue has not caused significant delay to the programme."

For More Information

[Digital Single Market webpage on WiFi4EU](#) (available in all EU official languages)