

ORDINARY SESSSION 2020-2021

5 June 2021

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**PARLIAMENT OF THE  
BRUSSELS-CAPITAL REGION**

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**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**of the deliberative committee responsible for making recommendations on the introduction of 5G  
in the Brussels-Capital Region in terms of the environment, health, the economy, employment and  
technological aspects**

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*See:*

**Parliament Documents:**

**A-382/1 – 2020/2021: Report.**

The deliberative committee responsible for making recommendations on the introduction of 5G in the Brussels-Capital Region in terms of the environment, health, the economy, employment and technological aspects makes the following recommendations.

## **Environment**

### *Recommendation 1*

Establish independent public monitoring to identify the impact of 5G waves, particularly on the environment. Appoint a group of experts responsible for this task and for reporting on the results to Parliament once a year.

Explore the possibility of maintaining 5G-free areas to enable comparison between 5G and non-5G areas.

### *Recommendation 2*

Encourage telecommunications operators to favour renewable energy sources and to offset their CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

### *Recommendation 3*

Ensure that the roll-out of 5G does not contravene European CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reduction targets, focusing in particular on the rebound effect.

### *Recommendation 4*

Work towards standardising municipal taxes on electricity pylons, masts and antennas, and, based on the ‘polluter pays’ principle and of a feasibility study, explore the possibility of tying the tax on antennas to their effective power with the aim of encouraging operators to reduce their energy consumption.

### *Recommendation 5*

Call, at federal and European levels, for manufacturers of smartphones and other connected objects to produce models that are easier to repair and recycle, to set a CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent limit for their manufacture and to organise recycling schemes in Europe to recover raw materials (circular economy) and avoid exporting pollution outside Europe.

### *Recommendation 6*

Make a tool available to citizens in the Brussels-Capital Region that informs them about their exposure to non-ionising radiation.

### *Recommendation 7*

Monitor the digital technology sector’s energy consumption, consumption of raw materials and recycling of connected objects.

### *Recommendation 8*

Once scientific studies have concluded, take into account the overall and differentiated effects on the environment of the

impact of the various 2, 3, 4 and 5G technologies.

*Recommendation 9*

Develop free tools for users to manage their individual mobile data consumption and the resulting energy consumption, or make such tools more readily accessible.

*Recommendation 10*

Raise population awareness, particularly among the school population, of the overall environmental and energy impact of digital technology and data consumption.

*Recommendation 11*

Explore how citizens can be encouraged to return their old smartphones and other connected devices for recycling.

*Recommendation 12*

Encourage telecommunications operators to indicate on their bills the CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent of their individual customer's data consumption.

**Health**

*Recommendation 13*

Establish independent public monitoring, financed by the telecommunications operators and economic players implementing 5G, to identify the impact of radio waves on health, focusing in particular on electrohypersensitivity.

Increase the population's awareness, particularly the school population, of the potential health risks and how best to protect themselves.

Likewise, raise awareness among medical staff and advocate, vis-à-vis the competent authorities, for a dedicated module on the risks associated with the use of non-ionising radiation to be included as part of health professionals' training.

*Recommendation 14*

Adopt an emissions standard less than or equal to 14.5 V/m that allows 5G to be developed but limits the number of antennas and the impact of 5G on health and the environment.

*Recommendation 15*

Put operational monitoring in place for antennas, focusing in particular on their compliance with the prevailing legislation and regulations, their consumption and on co-exposure.

*Recommendation 16*

Encourage the development of alternative technologies.

*Recommendation 17*

Ask the competent authorities to review the possibility of recognising electrohypersensitivity as an illness.

**Economy and employment**

*Recommendation 18*

Commission an independent study on how the structure of employment has changed with the introduction of 5G, identifying the main sectors of the economy potentially affected and the types of jobs created or lost.

Set up a fund, to which telecommunications companies would contribute, to offset the harm caused by job losses.

Ensure that workers affected are, as a matter of priority, directed towards other roles within the same company.

Train workers who need to adapt to the new digital technology tools, taking into account the need for training time and the affordability of such training.

Provide training free of charge to workers who have lost their job to enable them to apply for other jobs in other sectors.

*Recommendation 19*

Invest in pilot projects (*start-ups*) using 5G to improve quality of life in the Brussels-Capital Region.

*Recommendation 20*

Promote the re-use of parts within smartphones and other obsolete connected devices, and support circular-economy businesses operating in this field.

*Recommendation 21*

Offer training in digital technology tools to all Brussels residents.

*Recommendation 22*

Train young people, and particularly young job seekers, in creating future applications and uses of 5G.

*Recommendation 23*

Tie the tax payable on the materials used to construct antennas and produce peripheral equipment to their sustainability and energy efficiency.

Create a 'sustainability' label to this end.

*Recommendation 24*

Create a centre of expertise and research to develop new sustainable products and applications (5G antennas and peripherals, for example).

*Recommendation 25*

Roll out 5G in phases, prioritising industrial areas and companies that request it, in order to test its use by businesses, as well as places that accommodate large numbers of people in transit (rail stations, airports, metro stations, etc.).

*Recommendation 26*

Incorporate the concept of the right to disconnect into legislation to protect the well-being of workers outside their working hours.

**Technological aspects**

*Recommendation 27*

Ensure that telecommunications operators contribute to the costs of network control, without this cost being passed on to consumers.

*Recommendation 28*

In view of the impact of 5G on health, the environment, jobs, etc., favour the installation and use of fibre optics over the use of 5G and consequently the roll out of cabled network throughout Brussels, ensuring that it is particularly accessible in public spaces and operates in public buildings and collective housing to avoid dependency on the mobile network alone (*fibre to the home*).

*Recommendation 29*

Ensure that services are accessible by traditional means for people who do not wish to or cannot use computerised and digital technology tools in order to combat the digital divide.

*Recommendation 30*

Guarantee respect for privacy and consequently require telecommunications operators to strengthen and ensure network security to combat the risks of cyber attacks and protect personal data.

*Recommendation 31*

Prioritise the use of 5G for operators, public and private businesses, the judiciary and the emergency services over that of private use; reserve a specific frequency for emergency services in order to strengthen security and guarantee the performance and accessibility, at all times, of services such as the firefighting services, medical services and the police.

*Recommendation 32*

Incorporate TV and radio waves into electromagnetic exposure standards and ensure they are regularly monitored by the regional authorities.

*Recommendation 33*

Make cybersecurity a priority at all levels of government by strengthening the human and material resources devoted to cybersecurity.

## **Cross-cutting aspects**

### *Recommendation 34*

Ask the competent authorities ensure that the introduction of 5G does not result in an increase in telecommunications charges or citizens' taxes.

### *Recommendation 35*

Ensure that the introduction of 5G is communicated to citizens in a transparent manner by telecommunications operators.

### *Recommendation 36*

Promote the installation of optical fibre.

### *Recommendation 37*

Ensure that the entire population can access digital technology, through targeted education and physical support spaces.

Ensure that education is provided on digital technology consumption and on the risks associated with hyperconnectivity (addiction, overconsumption, privacy risks, cyber violence, cyber threats, cyber attacks, etc.), and continually raise the population's awareness of their dangers.

Initiate discussions with the competent authorities about prohibiting the use of smartphones in compulsory education, across all networks, by means of internal school rules and regulations (for use that is not directly linked to teaching).

### *Recommendation 38*

Ensure equal access to the Internet and to Internet-related knowledge by asking the competent authorities to set a preferential rate for vulnerable elderly people, low-income households and students.

### *Recommendation 39*

Establish a budget for reducing the digital divide, research on environmental impacts, social ties, mental health, burnout, and children's learning capacity, and for implementing pilot projects.

### *Recommendation 40*

With regard to conditions of use, ask the competent authorities to:

- 1° limit the use of private data as strictly as possible;
- 2° not make the use of private data subject to acceptance of by individuals of a user's agreement, but instead make any such agreement collective to protect users from any unintentional liability.
- 3° make it mandatory for terms and conditions of use to be clearer, simpler, and more easily understood by all.

### *Recommendation 41*

Establish independent external authorities for monitoring algorithms.

*Recommendation 42*

Set up an independent body responsible for giving a prior opinion on all orders and all decrees concerning the use of private data.

*Recommendation 43*

Initiate discussion on the possibility of having so-called white zones that minimise exposure to waves (specific premises, specific carriages, etc.).

The President,

Tristan ROBERTI