



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology

Electronic Communications Networks and Services
Spectrum

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Subject: Your mail dated 13 February 2015 to Commissioner Oettinger on the "Freifunk" initiative.

Dear Mr Krause,

Commissioner Günther H. Oettinger asked me to answer to your message on his behalf.

First of all please accept my apologies for the late reply. I read with interest and great satisfaction about your active participation to the "Freifunk" initiative which contributes to good quality internet access for all, in a concrete move to support the Digital Agenda for Europe programme.

The "Europe Loves Wi-Fi" expression is related to the publication of a study¹ which investigates the impact of WiFi in today's society. The Commission made an attempt to promote initiatives like 'Freifunk' by including appropriate proposals that facilitate WiFi in a Connected Continent legislation. Let me for instance mention recital 27, which summarises the situation you are witnessing:

"Most RLAN access points are so far used by private users as a local wireless extension of their fixed broadband connection. If end users, within the limits of their own internet subscription, choose to share access to their RLAN with others, the availability of a large number of such access points, particularly in densely populated areas, should maximise wireless data capacity through radio spectrum re-use and create a cost-effective complementary wireless broadband infrastructure accessible to other end users. Therefore, unnecessary restrictions for end users to share access to their own RLAN access points with other end users or to connect to such access points, should be removed or prevented".

Unfortunately, spectrum related provisions have been dropped by the Council during the examination of our proposal. Given the industry support, I do however intend to relaunch the debate in the context of the telecoms review, which is part of the recently announced

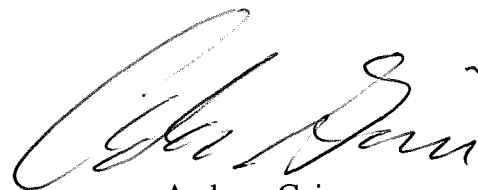
¹ See link: <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/news/europe-loves-wi-fi>

DSM (Digital Single Market) strategy, which you can read at the following address:
<https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/digital-single-market>

Coming to your specific request to *certify* private RLAN communities like "Freifunk Franken", I am afraid that it was never the intention of the study we published to undertake any type of certification.

Let me however assure you that the European Commission firmly believes in the need to provide access to the internet to all EU citizens independently from their income level and their geographical location (large cities or peripheral regions). An appropriate contribution to such a goal will come through removing barriers that hinder WiFi and other types of wireless LANS. We will continue to work with the Member States of the EU to ensure that innovative ideas related to WiFi are encouraged.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andreas Geiss', written in a cursive style.

Andreas Geiss
Head of Unit