

Electronic communications

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The objective of the electronic communications sector policy is to ensure the availability of high-quality and convenient electronic communications services throughout the territory of the Republic of Latvia in accordance with Electronic Communications Law and related legal acts. The [Electronic communications sector policy for years 2018-2020](#) is adopted by decision of The Cabinet of Ministers Nr.102 of March 12, 2018.

At the beginning of May 2020 there are 248 electronic communications services providers in Latvia registered by Public Utilities Commission.

Development of the next generation networks



In Latvia, the main program for expanding access in rural and remote areas is the State aid program called “Next generation network for rural areas” (2013-2020), co-financed by European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The program was established to improve availability of communication networks in rural areas by ensuring the deployment of middle-mile broadband infrastructure, where no service providers had infrastructure or did not plan to deploy fast broadband of at least 30 Mbps within the following three years. Within the framework of the rural broadband program, the Latvia State Radio and Television Centre (Latvijas Valsts Radio un Televizijas Centrs, LVRTC), the state owned provider, is responsible for building an open access middle mile infrastructure in the identified “white areas” which is then leased by retail service providers.

The project was divided in two stages. The first stage, completed in August 2015, aimed at deploying 177 access points and 1 813 km of fiber, while enabling operators to connect to the network at any location of the route. All objectives of the first phase were achieved by LVRTC. The second stage, started in 2016 and due to be finished by December 2021, is designed with the objective to deploy further 220 access points and 2 000 km of fiber. [More](#).

Implementation of 5G



On February 2020, the cabinet of Ministers in Latvia approved Latvia's 5G roadmap “Roadmap for the Deployment of Fifth generation (5G) Public Mobile electronic Communications Networks in Latvia”. The document provides an overview about spectrum allocation, deployment of commercial networks in large urban centers and coverage obligations planned for the allocation of 700 MHz related to railways and roads.

5G infrastructure and Via Baltic gateway

In terms of regional co-ordination, in September 2018, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania signed a memorandum of understanding where they agree to cooperate on the deployment of the 4G+, 4G ++ and 5G network along a section of the Via Baltica: Tallinn (Estonia) – Riga (Latvia) – Kaunas (Lithuania) – Lithuanian/Polish border in order improve road safety, to foster sustainable mobility and innovation in transportation systems and test autonomous vehicles.

Spectrum for digital terrestrial television and wireless broadband



The spectrum assigned for digital terrestrial television and wireless broadband services are mainly in the 700 MHz, the 1.5 GHz and the 26 GHz bands.

The 700 MHz band is currently used for TV broadcasting - digital terrestrial television (DTT) by Tet whose rights of use expire in 31 December 2021. The use of the 700 MHz band for wireless broadband is planned for 2022, with auctions expected between end 2020 and mid-2021. Advances in allocating this band depend on the DTT migration and the frequency coordination (to avoid mutual interferences) with Russia and Belarus.

703-733 MHz / 758-788 MHz bands will be allocated for wireless broadband services and could be used for Public Protection and Disaster Relief (PPDR) system based on agreement of PPDR system owner and electronic service providers.

Allocation of 733-736 MHz un 788-791 MHz bands for Internet of Things (IoT) will be subject to consider in the next sector policy plan making period.

In January 2019 the 1.5 GHz band (1427-1518 MHz) was allocated for electronic communications networks - mobile and wireless broadband services. Auction is planned for 2020.

Until the end of 2020 a part of 26 GHz spectrum band will be allocated for the use of mobile communication services. While spectrum bands above 24 GHz are already used for 5G tests, realizing the allocation of substantive frequency resources between 24.25 GHz and 27.5 GHz for 5G still requires coordination with the military.

WiFi4EU



The WiFi4EU initiative of the European Commission promotes free access to Wi-Fi connectivity for citizens in public spaces including parks, squares, public buildings, libraries, health centers and museums in municipalities throughout Europe. The budget of the WiFi4EU initiative is EUR 120 million between 2018 and 2020. It will support the installation of state-of-the-art Wi-Fi equipment in the centers of community life

The WiFi4EU initiative provides municipalities with the opportunity to apply for vouchers to the value EUR 15 000. The vouchers are to be used to install Wi-Fi equipment in public spaces within the municipality that are not already equipped with a free Wi-Fi hotspot.

More than 30 Latvian municipalities von a WiFi4EU voucher in the first 3 calls in 2018 and 2019.

Connectivity for a Competitive Digital Single Market - Towards a European Gigabit Society



On September 14, 2016 EC published Communication on Connectivity for a Competitive Digital Single Market - Towards a European Gigabit Society. Strategic objectives for 2025:

Gigabit connectivity (at least 1 Gb/s) for all main socio-economic drivers such as schools, transport hubs and main providers of public services as well as digitally intensive enterprises.

All urban areas and all major terrestrial transport paths to have uninterrupted 5G coverage.

All European households, rural or urban, will have access to Internet connectivity offering a downlink of at least 100 Mbps, upgradable to Gigabit speed.

The same objectives towards Gigabit Society are included in the Electronic communications sector policy for years 2018-2020 for Latvia.

European Electronic Communications Code



The Ministry of Transport in co-operation with Public Utilities Commission and the State Joint-Stock Company Electronic Communications Office of Latvia is working on the development of related legislation.

Data protection



The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) provides the main legislative framework for personal data protection in Latvia as well as in another EU countries. The Personal Data Processing Law (PDPL), which entered into force on 5 July 2018, was adopted to regulate some issues concerning the direct application of the GDPR in Latvia, such as determining the status of a supervisory authority and national requirements in specific situations of personal data processing.

Amendments to the Electronic Communications Law to improve data protection in the electronic communications sector will come in force July 1, 2020.

Introduction of IPv6



A key resource to ensure scalability and increase security, is the newer version of Internet Protocol (IP) - the IPv6, which replaces the largely exhausted IP version (IPv4), in terms of the distribution of unassigned addresses.

In order to encourage the adoption of IPv6, Latvia has developed IPv6 actions within the Cybersecurity Strategy for 2019-2022. Under that strategy, by the end of 2020, the Ministry of Transport and the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development (VARAM) should implement a set of measures to foster use of the IPv6 in public ICT systems.

The Ministry of Transport has constant discussions with communications sector players to speed up introduction of IPv6 and to promote introduction of IPv6 in public administration.

IoT and M2M [↗](#)



The Internet of Things (IoT) represents the next step in the convergence of ICT, society and the economy.

In Latvia operators provide a subset of the IoT - Machine-to-Machine (M2M) subscriptions. The issue has been raised whether to open a new numbering range in the Numbering Plan for M2M communications. Within the existing regulation, operators already offer IoT/M2M services based on mobile numbering resources allocated to them according with the current numbering. For more efficient usage of numbering resources the Ministry of Transport made the report on the changes in the national numbering plan.

Law on High-speed Electronic Communications Network [↗](#)



The purpose of the Law is to promote the construction and installation of the high-speed electronic communications network by both constructing a new and using the existing physical infrastructure in a cost-effective manner.

Universal Service [↗](#)



Universal service is the minimum volume of electronic communications services with a specified quality which for an affordable price is accessible to all existing and potential users irrespective of the geographical location thereof.

The Public Utilities Commission (Regulator) determines and regularly reviews the list of services included in the universal service, the scope of the universal service, the geographical territory and range of end-users, providing for that the end-users have the right to access a public electronic communications network.

Since 2017 universal service is limited to ensure publicly accessible electronic communications services to persons with disabilities, including the access to the State Fire and Rescue Service, State Police, Emergency Medical Service, gas emergency service, and in addition these services need to be equivalent to those services which are received by other end-users.

Registration of domain .lv [↗](#)



The Ministry of Transport approved The Institute of Mathematics and Computer Science of the University of Latvia as the holder and the Basic Service Provider of the top level .lv domain registry and the electronic numbering system.

Data and statistics of Latvian electronic communications sector are available:

[Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia](#)

[Public Utilities Commission](#)

[Europe Digital Scoreboard](#)

[Europe Digital Single Market](#)

<https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/stat/default.aspx>

[OECD](#)

<https://www.sam.gov.lv/en/electronic-communications-0>