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From:	Presidency
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Subject:	Draft Council Conclusions on reliable and resilient connectivity - Presidency third compromise text

INTRODUCTION

1. The PL Presidency presented the first draft of the Council Conclusions on reliable and resilient connectivity during the meeting of WP TELECOM of 21 January 2025, where delegations provided their initial comments orally.
2. Based on the written submissions received from the delegations afterwards, the PL Presidency drafted two additional compromise proposals, which were discussed at the meeting of WP TELECOM of 11 February and 18 March.
3. In the light of delegations' additional comments, the PL Presidency has drafted the third compromise proposal, which can be found in the annex of this document.
4. The PL Presidency invites delegations to analyse the text and prepare their inputs for the WP TELECOM meeting of **8 April 2025**, when this compromise text will be discussed.
5. The changes in the document compared to the initial text are underlined: additions are marked with **bold text**, deletions with ~~strikethrough~~.

II. MAIN CHANGES

6. In **paragraph 9a** the importance of improving recovery and repair capacities was emphasised, and **paragraph 18** was also amended accordingly.
 7. The text regarding satellite constellations in **paragraph 14** was further clarified.
 8. In the third sentence of **paragraph 16** a reference to the critical entities has been added in connection with GNSS jamming.
 9. New text in **paragraph 20** aims at highlighting the importance of risk assessments and trusted suppliers to reduce the risks of technological and trade interdependencies.
 10. The second part of **paragraph 26** was redrafted to avoid repetitions and recall the importance of assessing spectrum needs.
 11. **Paragraph 32a** was also amended to give account of the need for appropriate criteria when assessing Cable Projects of European Interest (CPEIs).
 12. A number of clarifications, editorial changes and minor modifications have been proposed throughout the text to improve its quality and readability.
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Draft Council Conclusions on reliable and resilient connectivity

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

RECALLING

- The Directive (EU) 2018/1972 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2018 on establishing the European Electronic Communications Code,
- **The Directive (EU) 2022/2555 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 December 2022 on measures for a high common level of cybersecurity across the Union, amending Regulation (EU) No 910/2014 and Directive (EU) 2018/1972, and repealing Directive (EU) 2016/1148 (NIS 2 Directive),**
- **The Directive (EU) 2022/2557 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 December 2022 on the resilience of critical entities and repealing Council Directive 2008/114/EC,**
- **The Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council on the update of the EU Maritime Security Strategy and its Action Plan "An enhanced EU Maritime Security Strategy for evolving maritime threats" of 10 March 2023;**
- **The Council Conclusions of 24 October 2023 on the Revised EU Maritime Security Strategy (EUMSS) and its Action Plan;**
- The Letta Report “Much more than a market – Speed, Security, Solidarity. Empowering the Single Market to deliver a sustainable future and prosperity for all EU Citizens” of 17 April 2024,
- The Draghi Report “The future of European competitiveness” of 9 September 2024,
- The Niinistö Report “Safer Together: Strengthening Europe’s Civilian and Military Preparedness and Readiness” of 30 October 2024,
- **The Radio Spectrum Policy Group Report “6G Strategic vision” of 12 February 2025,**
- **The Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council “EU Action Plan on Cable Security” of 21 February 2025,**

BUILDING ON:

- The Commission White Paper on “How to master Europe’s digital infrastructure needs?” of 21 February 2024,
- The Commission Recommendation of 26 February 2024 on Secure and Resilient Submarine Cable Infrastructures,
- The Council Conclusions of 21 May 2024 on “The Future of EU Digital Policy”
- The Council Conclusions of 6 December 2024 on the Commission White Paper “How to master Europe’s digital infrastructure needs?”.

General framework

1. NOTES that the European Union's connectivity infrastructure faces new and unprecedented challenges arising from an increasingly complex geopolitical situation, as underscored by the impact of ~~the Russian's Federation's military war of~~ aggression against Ukraine, ~~and as well as~~ from the growing frequency **number of physical, cyber and hybrid attacks and occurrences** of natural disasters due to global climate change. **EMPHASISES that threats to connectivity infrastructure have far reaching geopolitical implications on the EU's foreign policy as well as on the overall security environment of the EU.**
2. ACKNOWLEDGES that these pressures expose the vulnerabilities of terrestrial and non-terrestrial networks, **and of submarine cables**, thus requiring a **redefinition of the EU's strategic** ~~redefinition approach of~~ **to the** communications network development in light of the critical dependence of our society and economy on electronic communications **and digital infrastructure**, to safeguard the EU's ~~strategic autonomy~~ **digital sovereignty in an open manner** and economic prosperity, with particular attention to technological **leadership** and economic resilience, ~~together with digital sovereignty.~~
3. STRESSES that a comprehensive approach to the development of a reliable and resilient network infrastructure is essential for addressing new challenges related to more frequent natural disasters, ~~unintentional~~ **damaging incidents**, cyber-attacks and geopolitical related threats. This approach should be **taken into account and integrated into the possible revision of the existing legal framework** ~~enabled within the new, legal and strategic framework~~ **without prejudice to Member States' sole responsibility for national security.**
4. RECOGNISES that the large majority of intercontinental **and parts of intra-European** internet traffic runs over submarine cable infrastructures, which form ~~parts of the~~ **a** critical backbone network, being ~~at~~ increasingly **at** risk, as demonstrated by various incidents notably in the Baltic Sea. WELCOMES in this regard the measures in the Commission Recommendation on "Secure and Resilient Submarine Cable Infrastructures" and AGREES ~~with the Commission's White Paper on "How to master Europe's digital infrastructure needs?"~~ on the importance of a higher level of resilience and **technical** integration of all communication channels - terrestrial, non-terrestrial and, importantly, submarine - as a precondition for **reliable, resilient and secure** communications, **as stated in the Commission's White Paper on "How to master Europe's digital infrastructure needs?"**.

5. ~~ENDORSES~~ **NOTES** the vision of the Connected Collaborative Computing Network ("3C Network") set out in the Commission White Paper mentioned above, which is of strategic importance to safeguard and advance the EU's digital ~~technological~~ sovereignty **in an open manner and can**. ~~RECOGNISES the 3C Network as a key concept to enhance European innovations and create~~ **whilst strengthening** an ecosystem of connectivity and computational capacity in support of data and AI-based applications.

6. RECALLS that reliable and resilient connectivity through ~~network~~ **technical integration of different network types** and diversification has emerged as one of the key priorities, requiring multi-layered, interoperable and redundant networks. NOTES the need to mitigate communication disruptions by improving the **physical and geographic** redundancy of **networks as well as** of the power supply for **connectivity** ~~mobile network infrastructure and land corridors~~ for **all** the backbone networks. **RECOGNIZES the importance of diversification of infrastructure, in particular in emergency situations.**

7. CALLS FOR the establishment of a ~~new~~ strategic approach **for a reliable and resilient connectivity** that takes into account current and emerging technologies ~~like~~ **especially AI, 6G and quantum communications**, with a focus on the convergence of diverse network elements such as fixed, mobile and satellite (and other non-terrestrial elements) into a cohesive, ~~integrated~~, European digital ecosystem and market **for companies of all sizes**. ~~CALLS FURTHER FOR~~ **coordination with ongoing research and piloting initiatives on connectivity, such as the Smart Networks and Services Joint Undertaking, as well as other relevant connectivity infrastructure projects supported by EU funds like** ~~Horizon Europe, Digital Europe and Connecting Europe Facility (CEF2 Digital), including submarine cables, backbone connectivity infrastructures, as well as possible large scale pilots for 3C Network projects.~~

8. NOTES that this strategic approach ~~for integrated and resilient communication networks,~~ should **take into account the convergence of different network** ~~lead to the technical integration of various types of communication networks types~~ — including terrestrial, non-terrestrial, and submarine cables — while considering diverse business models and current trends, **thus**. ~~This holistic approach aims to unify different network types into a cohesive, reliable, and resilient system,~~ fostering ubiquitous and seamless connectivity across Europe enhancing competitiveness and reinforcing the European Single Market.

9. EMPHASISES that the convergence of ~~3GPP and non-3GPP~~ **different network types of networks providing access** presents a unique opportunity to take advantage of the strengths of different technologies and combine the best of their characteristics. NOTES that further development of **technically** integrated architecture will potentially create ~~a unified robust~~ networks that delivers a superior user **connectivity** experience.

9a. **CALLS FOR coordination with ongoing research and piloting initiatives on connectivity, such as the Smart Networks and Services Joint Undertaking, as well as other relevant connectivity infrastructure projects supported by EU funds like Horizon Europe, Digital Europe and Connecting Europe Facility (CEF2 Digital), including submarine cables, backbone connectivity infrastructures, recovery and repair capacities through leveraging on existing, and improving, cable vessels capacities, as well as possible large scale pilots for 3C Network projects. STRESSES the importance of future possible funding programmes that could contribute to the Union's strategic priorities.**

10. RECOGNISES the critical importance of international cooperation in enhancing global digital infrastructure resilience and reliability **while promoting a multi-stakeholder, human-centric and human rights-based approach to digital transformation**. HIGHLIGHTS the need for supporting EU candidate countries and other ~~like-minded~~ partner countries through the existing platforms **and EU initiatives**, like the Global Gateway, **and within the relevant international fora such as the ITU**, providing **inter alia** technical assistance, capacity-building and financial support, while collaborating with ~~like-minded~~ partners **countries** to search convergence on **policy approaches and regulatory and normative examples**, ~~to move towards joint criteria for reliable and resilient networks as well as digital infrastructures~~ and promote European solutions.

Resilience by network type diversification and interoperability

11. EMPHASISES that reliable and resilient connectivity can be improved through network type diversification by relying on multi-layered, interoperable terrestrial and non-terrestrial communication means supported by a robust backbone infrastructure, as well as risk assessments and good practices on mitigating measures **in line with the NIS2 and CER directives**.

12. ACKNOWLEDGES ~~that~~ the rapid development of ~~next-generation~~ satellite communication systems, including multi-constellation networks, a large number of which are ~~registered~~ **operated** and developed ~~outside the~~ **by non-EU actors**, which puts pressure on access to Earth's orbits and

spectrum. RECOGNISES at the same time the complementary roles of satellite **communication systems** (and other non-terrestrial capabilities), for uninterrupted availability of **communication service, in particular under all circumstances** to remote and underserved regions, providing critical redundancy and resilience against ground-based disruptions, **and enabling communications especially for which are particularly important for the provision of safety and disaster relief services in all circumstances.**

13. ~~HIGHLIGHTS~~ **EMPHASISES** the strategic importance of the IRIS² EU satellite constellation **which will integrate and its integral part EuroQCI**, for addressing long-term challenges in satellite communications security, safety, and **resilience and bridging the connectivity gaps across the Union**. Stresses it's the role of IRIS² in **building upon and underpinning the existing European satellite communication technological and industrial base, bridging the connectivity gaps across the Union and Europe's economic development, strategic autonomy and technological leadership also increasing** **improving** the EU's independence from non-European providers for ~~secured~~ communication services - **particularly secure ones, and thus contributing to the reinforcement of the Union's digital sovereignty in an open manner**. EMPHASISES therefore the need for a timely rollout of the IRIS², constellation **based on complementing and integrating the GOVSATCOM space programme component, consistent with international and national regulatory frameworks policies, and developing Europe's capacities in satellite communications from industrial as well as regulatory point of view as a necessary step forward to achieve advanced** **provide resilient connectivity communication services for governmental users and commercial users** ~~bridge connectivity gaps across the Union, and ultimately, for Europe's security and resilience.~~

14. ~~UNDERLINES~~ **EMPHASISES** ~~that the importance of~~ The Union should therefore ensure **ensuring** sufficient, safe, reliable, **resilient** and secure access to geostationary, medium and low earth orbits and to radio spectrum capacity **and compliance with which rely on the application of rules defined in the ITU Radio Regulations,** in line with international law, and better control of ~~a more transparent~~ access to its market by **STRESSES that the establishment of possible common requirements for** satellite constellations ~~registered~~ **operating accessing national and EU markets, including those registered under regulatory frameworks outside of the EU in order to guarantee a level playing field for all operators, should be based on the outcome of the ongoing discussion within the RSPG,** ~~outside the EU~~. ACKNOWLEDGES the ongoing evolution towards ~~integrating~~ **converging** mobile and satellite technologies including the recent

5G standardisation and 6G development, which ~~promotes convergence and~~ ensures seamless availability of electronic communication services regardless of the location **while supporting the development of European innovation capabilities and competition in the EU for the benefit of end users.**

15. FURTHER RECOGNISES the transformative potential **of complementary** of Direct-to-Device (D2D) satellite services, which extend beyond consumer smartphone applications to address mobility-related vertical markets such as ~~automotive~~ **transport**, aeronautical, and maritime sectors. NOTES the critical role **that** D2D services can play in improving public services, including civil protection, with far-reaching benefits across multiple domains. ACKNOWLEDGES that further ~~integration~~ **convergence** of satellite and mobile technologies ~~will~~ **has the potential to** drive socio-economic growth, improve network resilience, bridge the digital divides and address global connectivity challenges. **CALLS for the early integration of D2D services into the IRIS² global communication system structure from the outset in order to ensure global EU's competitiveness.**

16. HIGHLIGHTS the growing challenge **from deliberate jamming and spoofing** of ~~intentional~~ Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS) **that jamming and spoofing** ~~impacts~~ a wide range of critical infrastructure and services. ACKNOWLEDGES the work of the EU GNSS Interference Task Force. **CALLS FOR** a coordinated EU effort to establish a robust mechanism for managing information related to GNSS disruptions, ensuring timely reporting, data sharing **within the limits of national security requirements and Member States' competences, and as well as** coordinated response measures across Member States. UNDERLINES that precise time synchronisation provided by GNSS is essential for many **critical entities and** strategic ~~and critical~~ industries, including **aviation**, finance and electronic communications, **as well as energy, transportation and commerce**, and therefore any kind of disruption to these systems may have far-reaching economic and societal consequences. **CALLS for actions to provide alternative solutions to the continuous functionality provided by GNSS.**

17. NOTES that investments in sustainable technologies such as renewable energy supply, energy storage and smart metering contribute not only to the reduction of the carbon footprint but also to strengthen the resilience of **connectivity** infrastructure, ensuring uninterrupted access to **a source of power** at a time of emergency.

18. CALLS FOR the mobilisation of strategic investments to enhance digital infrastructure protection and resilience, with a particular focus on critical cables for backbone networks, to protect vital strategic interests of the EU in the Atlantic Ocean ~~as well as~~ and the Baltic, Black, Mediterranean and North seas, as well as in outermost regions. STRESSES the urgent need for comprehensive support for submarine cable infrastructure, as indicated in the EU Action Plan on Cable Security, including threat prevention, risk detection, rapid incident response, deterrence, as well as recovery and repair capacities through leveraging on existing, and improving, cable vessels capacities, and deterrence based on the work of the Submarine Cable Infrastructure informal Expert Group, in coordination with the Critical Entities Resilience (CER) Group and NIS Cooperation Group. UNDERSCORES the importance of increased capabilities in order to recover from unintended incidents or sabotage. EMPHASISES the need to ensure redundancy ~~NOTES the vulnerability of cross-border terrestrial fibre-optic connections basing on the lack of redundancy for physical routes and submarine cable infrastructures within Europe, for global connectivity.~~

19. RECOGNISES ongoing initiatives on fostering resilience such as in the framework of Council Recommendation 2023/C 20/01 on a Union-wide coordinated approach to strengthen the resilience of critical infrastructure and the NIS Cooperation Group Report ~~report on Cybersecurity~~ cybersecurity and resilience of Europe's communications infrastructures and networks as follow-up to the Nevers Call of 9 March 2022 ~~as well as the Commission Recommendation of 26 February 2024 on Secure and Resilient Submarine Cable Infrastructures.~~

20. UNDERSCORES the critical importance of cybersecurity in developing reliable and resilient connectivity infrastructure, as well as security **reducing the risks** of technological and trade interdependencies. RECOGNISES the importance of risk assessments to reduce security risks and dependencies, as well as using trusted suppliers – as defined in the framework of the 5G Toolbox - when deploying communication networks. UNDERLINES the importance of transposing and implementing the NIS 2 **and CER Directives** to ensure that the digital infrastructures and **essential** services are ~~cyber~~ secure. STRESSES the need to mitigate risks associated with supply chain security for all types of networks **and information systems and for rapid adoption of a toolbox of measures for reducing critical ICT supply chain risks.** In this context, CALLS to accelerate the full implementation ~~and enforcement~~ of the 5G cybersecurity toolbox, as well as ~~of other~~ the measures on supply chain security in line with the NIS 2 **and CER Directives, in particular the Union level coordinated security risk assessment of critical**

chains mentioned, and encourages discussions about a more harmonised approach to address emerging cybersecurity threats in electronic communications. ~~NOTES that working towards connecting the different protocols and communication channels, notably through standardisation, will require ensuring a high level of cybersecurity in each of the networks.~~

~~21. HIGHLIGHTS the necessity of creating a holistic approach to electronic communications infrastructure that breaks down historical silos in the development of different network types (e.g., submarine, satellite, fibre, 5G/6G). CALLS FOR strengthening interoperability at the core of any new strategic approach when it comes to network architecture and infrastructure.~~

22. RECOGNISES the strategic importance of developing a European **technically** integrated resilient communications networks that ensures ubiquitous coverage, ~~provides seamless interoperability~~, and maximises resilience across ~~its~~ **their** various elements ~~and holistically~~ through network type diversification **and redundancy**. EMPHASISES that the development of such a networks should **take into account Member-States' specificities** and be driven by market dynamics accompanied by targeted EU support, including through guidelines and funding for strategic connectivity projects.

Single market for reliable and resilient connectivity

23. ACKNOWLEDGES **that reliable and resilient connectivity infrastructure constitutes the backbone and a fundamental building block of the Single Market**, ~~that the Single Market which~~ is a main driver for EU competitiveness and innovation, positioning the Union as a global leader in the digital economy, strengthening its ~~strategic autonomy and~~ digital sovereignty **in an open manner**, ~~which results in providing prosperity to its businesses and citizens.~~

24. UNDERLINES that the Single Market for electronic communications should be deepened, ~~where necessary~~, through further harmonisation, ~~where necessary~~, and **improved cross-border connectivity and a simplified regulatory framework**, while recognising different business models of service providers, **regional circumstances and the national competence of Member States in the application of harmonised rules**. EMPHASISES that the improvements of the Single Market for electronic communications will reinforce the Union's ~~digital sovereignty and~~ competitiveness and **digital sovereignty in an open manner**, ~~and as well as~~ contribute to

ubiquitous coverage by reliable and resilient networks, for the benefit of EU citizens and businesses.

25. NOTES that fostering a ~~European technically~~ integrated and resilient ~~European~~ communications networks can open new market possibilities within the electronic communications sector, as well as horizontally in the digital economy, enhancing the Union's global competitiveness by driving technological innovation.

26. UNDERSCORES that the radio spectrum plays a key role for the benefit of the Single Market, EU economy and society as a whole. STRESSES that the efficient and coordinated use of radio spectrum supports EU policies, while maximising societal value, and serves to reach the objective of the improvement of the Single Market. ~~NOTES that the emergence creation of a European technically integrated resilient communications networks requires timely access to appropriate convergence of the networks requires efficient spectrum sharing between different networks, including~~ **ENCOURAGES the assessment of spectrum needs, including bands as a suitable candidates for 6G rollout, based on coverage and capacity requirements** for terrestrial and non-terrestrial networks **use cases**, ~~the prioritisation of new band allocations and support to emerging technologies, with a cross-border dimension.~~

27. ACKNOWLEDGES the successful European model of gradual spectrum harmonisation and the role of the ~~International Telecommunication Union~~ ITU in radio spectrum management. **CALLS on the Commission** ~~FOR the~~ to enhancement of the EU-level support mechanism for the Member States, which will provide a constructive framework, allowing **the Member States** to respond to encountered cross-border interferences cases within the EU and with third countries, not limited to purely technical issues.

28. ENCOURAGES the deployment and further development of futureproof, secure, and trustworthy standards as a baseline for technological developments, maintaining the EU's ~~technological~~ **digital** sovereignty **in an open manner**, and driving innovation and cohesion of the EU electronic communications sector. INVITES the European Commission, **the European External Action Service** and Member States to enhance the Team Europe approach in international fora by actively participating in global standard-setting processes, promoting European-developed standards **based on core EU values shared by the EU such as human rights**, and ensuring a coordinated European digital infrastructure strategy that includes all communication layers.

29. CALLS FOR a higher level of resilience by diversification and seamless, ubiquitous connectivity through further developing ~~an~~ **technically** integrated and resilient European communications networks in a multilayered approach encompassing **among others**: standardisation activities ~~advancing integrated networks~~, possible targeted financial ~~mechanisms~~ **instruments** supporting the development of ~~such interoperable networks~~, and guidelines facilitating market-driven deployment.

30. INVITES the European Commission to report to the Council on significant developments regarding **technically** integrated and resilient European communication networks. This should contribute to exchanging information and monitoring progress in achieving seamless and ubiquitous connectivity, ~~as well as to warning against risks and threats to reliable and resilient connectivity across the EU and within Member States, especially those exposed to major civil and non-civil risks.~~

31. INVITES the Commission to build on the work of the Submarine Cable Infrastructure informal Expert Group **under the strategic policy approach laid out in the Recommendation on Secure and Resilient Submarine Cable Infrastructures as well as in the EU Action Plan on Cable Security**, and reflect on concrete proposals to further promote the reliability and resilience of these infrastructures as a crucial part of European communication networks, **whilst recalling that national security is the sole responsibility of Member States**. ~~FURTHER CALLS FOR developing the comprehensive approach to security and resilience of submarine cable infrastructures laid out in Recommendation (EU) 2024/779, for instance, with regards to enhanced monitoring and rapid response capacities to limit the vulnerability of key digital infrastructure.~~

32. RECOGNISES that continuous and uninterrupted connectivity is essential for a secure and properly functioning Union. TAKES INTO CONSIDERATION the more frequent natural disasters and other threats, which make the redundancy of **the supply of power for networks** ~~power supply~~ an urgent challenge. CALLS **on** the European Commission to analyse and propose appropriate measures, including financial support (without pre-empting the negotiations of the next Multiannual Financial Framework MFF).

32a. CALLS **on the European Commission to investigate assess the possibility for a coordinated initiative for planning and developing a reliable and resilient network of digital infrastructures and capacities, encompassing backbone terrestrial and submarine**

networks, across the Union and with international partner countries, for example by using the Trans-European Networks framework and establishing a TEN-D (Trans-European Networks - Digital) instrument. ~~UNDERLINES that WELCOMES the Commission's leadership of approach to the Arctic Connectivity Initiative as well as ongoing efforts to reinforce digital infrastructures resilience of EU maritime in the Baltic and Central and Eastern Europe regions, which are could be valuable examples of that can become~~ STRESSES the need to define and follow clear, integrated, and tangible criteria, taking into account Recommendation (EU) 2024/779, when assessing Cable Projects of European Interest (CPEIs), improving security and resilience and promoting international partnerships, along with other strategic projects for such an that could be embodied in the TEN-D instrument.

33. COMMITS to continuously monitor and adapt the EU's **strategic approach** to communication infrastructure ~~strategies~~ to address emerging technological, geopolitical, and environmental challenges, ensuring reliable and resilient connectivity across the Union.
