

**Question for written answer E-001723/2024
to the Commission**
Rule 144
Elsi Katainen (Renew)

Subject: Ensuring reliable and fast connections in rural areas and regions bordering Russia

Today, high-speed broadband connectivity is a necessity, even in sparsely populated areas. While better speeds have been introduced and fibre optic cables are reaching many homes, growing regional disparity is a reality. Adequate and reliable connectivity is a necessity for many activities, including business, investment, farming and teleworking.

By way of example, people living in rural areas in Finland are experiencing low speeds and limited connectivity, as 3G networks are being dismantled. The proximity of the Russian border and potential interference with telecommunications networks underlines the need to ensure secure, reliable and fast connections outside urban areas. Support for the construction of fixed networks has been provided through rural development and recovery instrument funds, but this has resulted in broadband largely being built in areas with sufficient population density.

How will the Commission ensure that the Gigabit Society 2025 and Digital Decade 2030 targets can be achieved in sparsely populated areas in the regions bordering Russia, especially with regard to broadband development?

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