

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000092/25
to the Commission**

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(13 January 2025)

Subject: The impact of Starlink on the European satellite Internet service market

The EU has launched the IRIS² project to provide secure and resilient satellite connectivity. The SpaceX/Starlink constellation is a non-EU firm providing satellite Internet service. It currently represents a near monopoly of around 6 500 satellites in low Earth orbit, with plans under way to add tens of thousands more. Recent press reports allude to ongoing negotiations between some Member States and SpaceX/Starlink with a view to concluding multi-year contracts for connectivity services.

Against this background:

1. How does the Commission intend to proceed in the event that some Member States decide to enter into multi-year contracts with SpaceX/Starlink, which, taking advantage of its current dominant position, could pre-empt the potential market for an emerging European project like IRIS²?
2. In light of the Union's strategic goal of strengthening its digital sovereignty, ensuring strategic autonomy and reducing dependence on third countries, would the Commission not consider it more appropriate for Member States to rely on European projects such as IRIS²?
3. As satellite communication networks share the critical and sensitive nature of 5G infrastructure, is the Commission considering the development of a framework similar to the 5G security toolbox for this satellite technology to address security risks, fostering a coordinated approach to digital sovereignty?

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Answer given by Mr Kūbilius on behalf of the European Commission
(19 March 2025)

The Commission does not have any official information of an agreement and cannot comment, as a matter of principle, on a purported agreement between a Member State and a commercial satellite network operator. It is at the discretion of Member States to determine how to manage their national secure communication and their degree of reliance on non-EU solutions.

The EU strives for leadership in strategic technology and to boost its technological sovereignty. It was the EU's governmental actors who expressed their growing strategic demand for secure, sovereign and reliable space-based satellite communication services.

The Commission's proposal for the Infrastructure for Resilience, Interconnectivity and Security by Satellite (IRIS²) Regulation ⁽¹⁾, strongly supported by Member States and the European Parliament since its inception, encapsulates the EU's reply to fully address these public user needs and requirements in the space domain.

The IRIS² Regulation requires all the components of the programme to be accredited by the Security Accreditation Board established under Article 72(1)(c) of Regulation (EU) 2021/696 ⁽²⁾.

The Commission will take stock of all the tools and technologies available in Europe, including the 5G security toolbox, in order to meet the requirements of the Security Accreditation Board.

⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EU) 2023/588 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 March 2023 establishing the Union Secure Connectivity Programme for the period 2023-2027, OJ L 79, 17.3.2023, p.1-39.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 170, 12.5.2021, p. 69-148.