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Answer given by Executive Vice-President Virkkunen
on behalf of the European Commission
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The EU is developing its own secure satellite communications infrastructure, IRIS2 (Infrastructure for Resilience, Interconnectivity and Security by Satellite), expected to be operational in 2030. It will support high-speed, low-latency applications for both governmental and commercial needs. IRIS2 will enable cost-competitive terminals, also thanks to the re-use of terrestrial 5G mobile networks technology, the use of open standards and interfaces.

Access to high-speed satellite connectivity is also facilitated by the Govsatcom programme, which enables the sharing and pooling of resources among Member States.

Moreover, Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) Digital supports the deployment of strategic backbone networks contributing to the resilience, security and quality of connectivity within the EU, as well as with third countries. This action includes the funding of satellite infrastructure, notably satellite ground stations and their inter-connection.

The forthcoming Digital Networks Act will help boost EU competitiveness and sovereignty by addressing barriers to the development of pan-European satellite services and ensuring a level-playing field by promoting coordinated access to the EU satellite market.

In addition, considering the evolution of smart networks and services, the Smart Networks and Services Joint undertaking for 6G is supporting the development of non-terrestrial network technologies and components including experimental infrastructure in cooperation with the European Space Agency.

Finally, the on-going review on the future of the EU 2 GHz Mobile Satellite Services (MSS) spectrum¹ represents another opportunity to strengthen secure EU communications and strategic autonomy.

¹ Commission requests input from stakeholders on the use of spectrum bands for mobile satellite systems | Shaping Europe's digital future <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/news/commission-requests-input-stakeholders-use-spectrum-bands-mobile-satellite-systems>.