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E-002607/2026

Answer given by Executive Vice-President Virkkunen
on behalf of the European Commission
(1.9.2026)

Accelerating the deployment of high-performance 5G Standalone (5G SA) networks is essential for Europe's digital transformation, industrial competitiveness and the future development of 6G.

Despite progress in assigning the harmonised 5G pioneer bands, the deployment of 5G SA remains uneven across the EU. This reflects still-emerging demand for advanced 5G services, fragmented national spectrum regulation, heterogeneous authorisation conditions and high investment costs of network upgrades.

The Commission proposal for a Digital Networks Act¹ (DNA) aims to address these barriers by promoting a more coherent and investment-friendly regulatory framework. The DNA proposes more consistent and investment-friendly conditions for radio spectrum assignment, including indefinite licence durations and facilitated renewal, more efficient use of spectrum, through mainstreaming spectrum sharing, where technically feasible and in line with competition law, and reinforced ‘use it or share it’ obligations, more predictable spectrum awards, through an ex-ante spectrum Single Market mechanism to prevent market distortion, and long-term spectrum planning, and spectrum availability for key services and technologies, through the establishment of a Union Radio Spectrum Strategy and roadmap.

By improving investment conditions and reducing regulatory fragmentation, the DNA will accelerate network upgrades and the transition to 5G SA, paving the way for future 6G deployment.

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52026PC0016>.