Press release

5G

Arcep presents its recommendations to operators regarding coverage maps

Paris, 22 October 2020

In June 2020, Arcep announced the launch of a new initiative under its coordination, working with consumer associations, stakeholders involved in testing and measuring QoS, and operators, with the goal of making it easier for consumers to understand the technical aspects of 5G.

Two meetings of this working group, on 16 September and 16 October, provided an opportunity for specialists (academics, players involved in testing and measuring, Arcep experts, etc.) to share technical details needed to understand 5G performances, and respond to consumer associations' queries. It also enabled the latter to share their expectations, notably with respect to coverage maps, to ensure that consumers have clear information on the availability of services, as soon as 5G launches.

Recommendations for operators for designing 5G coverage maps

All consumer associations agreed on one topic: coverage maps accompanying the launch of 5G must not depict disparate quality of service levels as being identical. The user experience may indeed vary depending on how 5G is deployed – and especially depending on which frequency bands are used.

To ensure that consumers have proper information on the actual availability of a 5G-based service, Arcep is publishing today a set of recommendations for mobile operators. In particular, Arcep expects operators to publish maps that can reflect the theoretical quality of a service available in 5G. This means that a 5G map that mixes together very different frequency bands – such as the 3.5 GHz band on the one hand, and different bands on the other, would not meet this criterion, unless it clearly depicts for the user at least two QoS levels on the map (e.g. two or more tiers of connection speed).

There are also several recommendations aimed at stakeholders involved in testing and measuring QoS, so that the metrics they produce align as closely as possible with reality.

Arcep established these recommendations based on input from the working group's participants, and consumer associations in particular, but the recommendations in no way constitute a commitment from them.

In a longer term perspective, Arcep has also begun work on drafting a legally binding decision that will define the content and verification procedure for mobile coverage maps, taking 5G into account. In this perspective, Arcep will be able to draw on the lessons learned from the first 5G rollouts.

Making it easier to compare 5G offers

To make it easier for everyone in the ecosystem (consumer associations and the specialised media in particular) to compare 5G offers from operators, Arcep will be publishing in November the presentation material produced during the working meetings. These documents enrich Arcep's 5G-related publications (such as the "Let's talk 5G" FAQ). This initiative makes Arcep the first regulator in Europe to tackle the issue of ensuring clarity on 5G commercial products.

These presentations help to understand, for instance:

• The different parameters that make up the "5G experience" for users (speed, latency, etc) and what they depend on:

• The different ways that operators can deploy 5G, using different frequency bands;

• The concept of "anchor band" and why there will initially be no 5G without 4G.

Associated document

- [Arcep recommendations](#)

Arcep at a glance

The Regulatory Authority for Electronic Communications, Postal Affairs and Print Media Distribution (Arcep), a neutral and expert arbitrator with the status of independent administrative authority (IAA), is the architect and guardian of internet, fixed and mobile telecoms and postal networks in France.