Press release

THE ENVIRONMENT

"Achieving digital sustainability": Arcep delivers a progress report on the latest developments and ongoing work

Paris, 5 April 2023

Today, Arcep delivered a progress report on the latest developments and ongoing work being done on digital sustainability. The audience included associations, institutions, operators, tech companies, journalists, and experts on the matter.

During the delivery of this progress report Arcep Chair, Laure de La Raudière, reasserted Arcep, ADEME and Arcom's shared ambition to work together on achieving digital sustainability

As Laure de La Raudière stated: *"Today, Arcep is exploring the ways and means to reconcile reducing the digital environmental footprint and achieving the regulatory goals of fair and effective competition and high-quality connectivity for all. Naturally, these ways and means require inclusive dialogue and collective policy making. This concerns our society and the choices it will make, and testifies to the importance of a collaborative process that includes not only our institutions, but also stakeholders and citizens".*

United by a shared ambition Arcep, Arcom and ADEME provided an overview of their complementary workstreams

The Directorate-General for Enterprise and the Commissioner-General for Sustainable Development (CGDD) presented the "Decarbonising the digital sector" roadmaps.
ADEME, Arcom and Arcep delivered an overview of the work they have been doing for the past three years, each with its own set of objectives:

- **Collect and publish data on the digital environmental footprint**

  This is the goal of [Arcep's annual "Achieving digital sustainability" survey](#) whose first edition was published in April 2022. Produced based on indicators collected from the country's four main telecoms operators, the second edition of the survey will be published in April 2023. It will incorporate indicators on the refurbishment and recycling of ISP routers and set-top boxes. Publication of the third edition, which will be expanded to include device suppliers and data centre operators, is scheduled for late 2023. Over time, these indicators will create the ability to obtain a detailed and accurate measurement of the digital environmental footprint.

- **Assessing the digital environmental footprint**

  In March, Arcep and ADEME published the [final volume of their study on the digital environmental footprint in 2030 and 2050](#). [The first two volumes of the study, on assessing the digital environmental footprint France in 2020,](#) were published in January 2022.

  For the past two years, Arcep and ADEME have also been co-running the Technical Experts Committee on measuring the digital environmental footprint. In April 2023, the Committee delivered [an analysis of the gaps observed in the findings of different studies dedicated to measuring the digital environmental footprint](#).

  In concert with Arcep and ADEME, Arcom has launched a study on the environmental impact of the different audiovisual media service distribution systems, whose results are expected to be published in 2024.

- **Helping raise awareness about digital's global environmental impact and surrounding issues**

In January 2023, Arcep published an FAQ for the general public on its website, offering tips and best practices for digital device users on how to curtail their environmental footprint. Drawing on the findings of its work, the Authority recommends, for instance, opting for a fixed (fibre, ADSL) internet connection whenever possible.

A recommendation on informing consumers via TV services, on-demand audiovisual media services and video sharing platform services will also be published by Arcom and Arcep, in concert with ADEME.

For the second year in a row, Arcep also included questions on the digital environmental footprint in the Digital Market Barometer[1]. After having focused on smartphones in the 2021 edition, the 2022 edition looked at consumers' behaviour across the entire life cycle of their household's main television (choice of a new or used TV, and how long they keep it).

- **Promoting digital environmental footprint issues on a European and international scale**

  Arcep is actively involved on the European stage, sharing its experience and the findings of its work. The first BEREC report on the impact of the digital sector on the environment was published in June 2022, along with a study of telecoms' impact on the environment, produced by consultants. To achieve the goal of greater transparency for the information available on telecommunications' environmental footprint, BEREC began work in summer 2022 on sustainability indicators for measuring the environmental impact of telecoms. A public consultation on the draft report will run until 12 April 2023.

  In 2022, as part of France's Presidency of the Council of the European Union (PFUE), Laure de La Raudière spoke at the Digital Assembly in Toulouse in June during a roundtable on "Accelerating the digital and Green transition in Europe," before an audience of politicians, government agents and European industry heads. Since that event, on France's initiative, a call from some 20 Member States for a dual digital and Green transition was published, reiterating the importance of greater environmental transparency from the digital sector, and the role of BEREC's work in tackling this issue.

The dual digital and Green transition has also become a top priority for the OECD. Through the different working groups of which it is a member, Arcep has had an opportunity to share its experience, and contribute to discussions: Arcep took part in the process of drafting the Declaration on a trusted, inclusive and sustainable digital future ensuring, among other things, the inclusion of a sustainable digital transition in the signatories' renewed commitments. The Authority also contributed to the work of the OECD Network of Economic Regulators (NER) on economic regulators' role in the Green transition, and the future consequences for their governance.

Arcep is publishing two documents, providing an inventory of its work on digital environmental issues

To take stock of all of the work and actions Arcep has done on digital environmental issues, two complementary documents are being published today:

- a panorama of initiatives led by Arcep, or in collaboration with Arcom and ADEME, along with national and international initiatives in which it is taking part;
- an historical timeline of all of the work that Arcep has done on digital sustainability since 2019.

Associated documents:

- Panorama of initiatives led by Arcep, or in collaboration with Arcom and ADEME
- Historical timeline of all of the work that Arcep has done on digital sustainability since 2019
- Slides presented at the press conference on 5 April 2023

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[1] Every year, Arcep, the Economic Council (CGE), France's National Agency for Territorial Cohesion (ANCT) and Arcom release the Digital Market Barometer, an annual survey conducted by CREDOC on changes in digital device ownership and user behaviours in France.

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 communications and postal networks in France.