

Press release

OPTICAL FIBRE

Optical fibre network completeness: Arcep publishes a draft recommendation for public consultation on implementing the obligation of complete deployment

Paris, 12 November 2024

Arcep is publishing a draft recommendation for public consultation whose purpose is to provide additional details on implementing the obligation to ensure the completeness of fibre to the home (FttH) network deployments. At the end of Q2 2024, 39.3 million households in mainland France were passed for FttH, or 89% of all premises in the national territory, and 23 million were subscribing to an FttH plan. This means that one in 10 – or 5.1 million – premises still remains to be passed for fibre.

The “symmetrical” regulatory framework governing FttH sets the rules for commercial operators’ access to these networks. In particular, it imposes an obligation of network “completeness”¹ in less densely populated areas. This obligation requires the FttH infrastructure operator to deploy a network that enables all residential and commercial premises in the area to be connected within a reasonable timeframe (the completeness deadline). This obligation also stipulates that after this deadline, and under certain conditions set forth in the framework, residential or commercial premises can remain classified as “to be connected upon request”², or impossible to connect, notably in duly justified cases falling outside the infrastructure operator’s responsibility where the connection has been blocked or refused.

Arcep wants to provide additional details on the symmetrical framework, which will be useful during the copper network switchoff, on those situations that are likely to impede or delay fibre network deployments

One of the chief aims of the draft recommendation is to clarify the various instances that impede or delay FttH network deployments, such as:

- Infrastructure operators’ refusals from property owners or other third parties
Discussions with operators reveal that questions remain over how these instances of refusal are identified and justified. This topic is especially important as the copper network switchoff will begin to accelerate in 2025, and due to be complete by 2030 according to the Orange plan, and given that the legacy copper network cannot be switched off in any given municipality unless every premises there has been passed for fibre, with the exception of those particular instances of third-party refusal.
- Premises identified as “to be connected upon request” by infrastructure operators
The new rollout commitments that Orange made to the Government in early 2024, in accordance with Article L. 33-13 of the French Postal and Electronic Communications Code (CPCE), led Orange to declare that there were more than 460,000 premises “to be connected upon request” as of June 2024. This substantial increase in the number of premises to be

¹ Article 3 of Arcep Decision No. 2010-1312 of 14 December 2010: https://www.arcep.fr/uploads/tx_gsavis/10-1312.pdf.

² A premises that is connected “upon request” is one referenced by an FttH infrastructure operator, where the installation of an optical connection point (OCP) is performed by the infrastructure operator within six months of the first order from a commercial operator for an FttH line that depends on this OCP, such that the premises is effectively passed for fibre.

connected upon request, coupled with the potential increase in the use of this “upon request” mechanism by other infrastructure operators, accentuates the issue of operators’ proper use of this category of premises once the completeness deadline has passed, and requires clarification.

- **New and under construction buildings**

It emerged from recent discussions that Arcep was able to have with the sector’s stakeholders that clarification is also needed on connecting new buildings to the FttH network, to ensure that their connection is effective, performed in a timely fashion and under the best possible conditions.

The deadline for responding to the public consultation is 20 December 2024

Associated documents

- [The public consultation](#)
- [Draft recommendation](#)

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, postal networks and press distribution in France.