

Press release

THE ENVIRONMENT

BEREC publishes a new report on environmental indicators of sustainability for the telecoms sector

Paris, 13 October 2023

Yesterday, BEREC (the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications) is publishing [a report analysing the indicators that create the ability to track the telecoms sector's impact on the environment](#). The aim is to work on defining common indicators for the European Union to increase environmental transparency in the telecoms sector, which is a goal set by European Union.

BEREC has devoted itself to examining the digital sector's impact on the environment since 2020, through the work done by the "Sustainability" working group, of which Arcep is co-chair. This is BEREC's second publication on this topic, one year after the very first report on regulators' role in reducing the impact of the digital sector on the environment.

A toolkit of 19 sustainability indicators to track the telecoms sector's environmental impact

Drawing on a series of workshops and a survey of some 30 European Authorities and 80 private enterprises, this new BEREC report proposes a toolkit of 19 sustainability indicators for regulators and other institutions wanting to examine and collect data from telecoms sector players. It is also meant to inform the work being done by the European Commission to implement a Code of conduct for telecoms networks and services. This Code of conduct, which is currently in the draft stage, is expected to recommend a list of common sustainability indicators, if not targets, for the sector, in the same vein as the current [Code of conduct on data centre energy efficiency](#).

Encourage transparency on environmental data across Europe

The report also sets out upcoming challenges to promoting environmental transparency in the telecoms sector at the European level. BEREC is calling on manufacturers in particular to publish more environmental data, including open datasets. The availability of this information is critical to producing studies enabling the analysis of the sector's different impacts on the environment across its life cycle, such as the [Ademe-Arcep study on the digital environmental footprint in 2020, 2030 and 2050](#). Sustainability indicators are also key to guiding public authorities' actions and creating incentives for industry stakeholders.

Coordinating environmental regulatory initiatives and efforts

BEREC also highlights existing industry initiatives. The report thus urges EU-wide coordination and harmonisation, and using existing regulatory frameworks as much as possible when defining new indicators, particularly obligations with respect to monitoring the recently updated Corporate social responsibility Directive.

Arcep cited amongst the pioneering Authorities on collecting and publishing environmental data

The report also capitalises on the work already being done by European Authorities that have implemented environmental data collection at the national level: Arcep along with the Belgian (BIPT), Finnish (Traficom) and Spanish (CNMC) regulators. [Arcep's annual Achieving digital sustainability survey](#) – whose next edition is scheduled for late 2023 – is thus held up as illustrative of the role that national regulatory authorities can play in increasing the sector's environmental transparency.

Helping to the European debate on environmental indicators in the telecoms sector

The environmental transparency of the telecoms sector is among the goals set by the [European Green Deal](#). During the French presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2022, Member States had issued a [call](#) recognising the need to develop a methodology and indicators for better quantifying the digital sector's environmental footprint, while underscoring the role that BEREC has to play. The [European Union's action plan for digitalising the energy sector](#) details the actions the Commission needs to take to define common indicators for the telecoms sector, in concert with telecoms regulators and industry stakeholders.

Arcep represented BEREC during a European Commission workshop in Brussels on 10 October, presenting the findings of a report being published today. The Authority also delivered a reminder of the importance of having an EU-wide harmonised regulatory framework that would enable national regulators to take all of the necessary steps to foster transparency and reduce the digital sector's impact on the environment. Arcep will continue to lend its experience and expertise to the work being done in Europe, particularly with the forthcoming edition of its annual "Achieving digital sustainability" survey, which is due out in late 2023.

Associated documents :

- [BEREC report on environmental indicators for sustainability in the telecoms sector \(2023\)](#)
- [BEREC on regulators' role in limiting the impact of the digital sector on the environment](#) (2023)
- [Annual "Achieving digital sustainability" survey](#), second edition (2023)

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.