

MANIFESTO

ARCEP,

NETWORKS AS COMMON GOODS

Internet, fixed and mobile telecom and postal networks constitute the "Infrastructures of freedom". Freedom of expression, freedom to communicate, freedom to access knowledge and to share it, but also freedom of enterprise and innovation, which are key to the country's ability to compete on the global stage, to grow and provide jobs.

Because it is essential in all open, innovative and democratic societies to be able to enjoy these freedoms fully, national and European institutions work to ensure that these networks develop as a "common good," regardless of their ownership structure, in other words that they meet high standards in terms of accessibility, universality, performance, neutrality, trustworthiness and fairness.

Democratic institutions therefore concluded that independent state intervention was needed to ensure that no power, be it economic or political, is in a position to control or impede users' (consumers, businesses, associations, etc.) ability to communicate.

France's Electronic Communications and Postal Regulatory Authority (Arcep), a neutral and expert arbitrator with the status of quasi autonomous non-governmental organisation, is the architect and guardian of communications networks in France.

As network architect, Arcep creates the conditions for a plural and decentralised network organisation. It guarantees the market is open to new players and to all forms of innovation, and works to ensure the sector's competitiveness through pro-investment competition. Arcep provides the framework for the networks' interoperability so that users perceive them as one, despite their diversity: easy to access and seamless. It coordinates effective interaction between public and private sector stakeholders when local authorities are involved as market players.

As network guardian, Arcep enforces the principles that are essential to guaranteeing users' ability to communicate. It oversees the provision of universal services and assists public authorities in expanding digital coverage nationwide. It ensures users' freedom of choice and access to clear and accurate information, and safeguards against possible net neutrality violations. From a more general perspective, Arcep fights against any type of silo that could threaten the freedom to communicate on the networks, and therefore keeps a close watch over the new intermediaries that are the leading Internet platforms.