



# International Amateur Radio Union Region 1

Europe, Middle East, Africa and Northern Asia  
Founded 1950

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## EC Call for Evidence:

**Subject: Review of the Digital Decade policy programme**

## EC proposal:

Via a call for evidence, the European Commission launched a review of the **Digital Decade Policy Programme 2030**, a framework established in 2022 to drive the digital transformation of the EU through common targets and monitoring. This review is mandated by Article 4(2) of the DDPP Decision and is scheduled for completion by **Q2 2026**.

## Main Policy Points & Objectives

The review aims to ensure the DDPP remains future-proof by addressing several key areas:

- **Updating Targets and Objectives:** The Commission will assess if current 2030 targets accurately reflect new technological realities, such as **foundational AI models**, deep-tech competition, and geopolitical changes.
- **Shifting Priorities:** The review will look at aligning the programme with contemporary priorities like **technological sovereignty**, cybersecurity, economic competitiveness, sustainability, and defense.
- **Simplifying Governance:** A major goal is to **reduce administrative burdens** for Member States by streamlining reporting and coordination requirements without losing the framework's effectiveness.
- **Future-Proofing Funding:** With the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) ending in 2026, the review will explore how to align digital policy with the next **Multiannual Financial Framework**, the European Competitiveness Fund, and private investments.
- **Inclusive Engagement:** The initiative seeks to create structured channels for **stakeholder involvement**, specifically increasing the role of regional and local actors (cities and regions) in delivering digital transformation.

## Consultation and Next Steps

The Commission is actively seeking feedback to inform this review:

- **Call for Evidence:** Open for at least four weeks to gather input from the public, industry, and academic experts.
- **External Study:** A dedicated study involving surveys, interviews, and workshops is being conducted in parallel.

- **Potential Legislation:** While the report itself has no direct impact, it may serve as the basis for a **legislative proposal** to formally amend the Digital Decade targets and governance.

## **IARU Region 1 Response:**

The **International Amateur Radio Union Region 1 (IARU R1)** represents the interests of the amateur radio service and its operators across Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and Northern Asia. We welcome the European Commission's review of the Digital Decade Policy Programme (DDPP) 2030 and fully support its vision for a secure, resilient, and digitally sovereign European Union.

The amateur radio service, as defined by the ITU Radio Regulations, is a non-commercial, self-training, intercommunication, and technical investigation service. It is a unique, distributed, and proven resource that directly contributes to the DDPP's core objectives concerning skills, infrastructure, and resilience. This submission outlines the opportunities the amateur service presents and the necessary policy actions to ensure its continued contribution to the EU's digital transformation and resilience.

### **Key Proposals for the Digital Decade Policy Programme Review**

We propose the inclusion of the following four strategic points in the reviewed DDPP to fully integrate the amateur radio community into the EU's digital future:

#### **1. Uphold Spectrum Sovereignty and Protect Non-Commercial Bands**

While the DDPP prioritises commercial spectrum for services like 5G, true technological sovereignty requires protecting resources dedicated to non-commercial experimentation. IARU R1 proposes that the Commission reinforces the protection of internationally allocated frequency bands for amateur services from commercial encroachment and harmful interference. Protected spectrum is vital for **"living laboratory"** technical investigations that historically drive innovation for the broader wireless sector.

#### **2. Leverage Amateur Radio for Digital Skills and STEM Pipelines**

To meet the DDPP target for a Digitally Skilled Population, the EU should leverage the amateur radio service as a hands-on mechanism for developing expertise in electronics, RF engineering, software-defined radio, and data networking. This community serves as a critical, low-barrier gateway to STEM careers. The DDPP should recognise amateur radio organisations as non-formal education stakeholders essential for addressing the ICT specialist gap, particularly by engaging younger generations.



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### **3. Integrate Amateur Radio into EU Resilience and Security Planning**

To enhance technological sovereignty, the DDPP must account for communication systems that operate independently of commercial internet, GSM, and terrestrial power grids. In the event of large-scale failures—due to natural disasters, cyber-attacks, or power outages—the amateur service provides a vital, distributed, and instantly deployable backup capability. We propose that Member States be encouraged to formally integrate amateur radio into national and regional civil protection and critical infrastructure resilience plans.

### **4. Streamline Governance and Reduce Administrative Burden**

The existing framework, governed by CEPT Recommendations, facilitates cross-border operation and exemplifies a well-functioning digital single market. This review should reaffirm commitment to harmonised licensing and operating conditions to maintain a low-bureaucracy environment for technical experimentation. Furthermore, the Commission should explicitly include non-commercial stakeholders like IARU R1 in spectrum policy and digital resilience discussions to ensure the continuity of the service's public benefit role.

### **Conclusion**

The amateur radio community is a reservoir of expertise, resilience, and hands-on technical skills that aligns closely with the goals of the Digital Decade Policy Programme. By protecting its spectrum, leveraging its educational value, and integrating its resilience capabilities, the European Commission can secure a cost-effective, non-commercial asset for the benefit of the EU's digital transformation and its citizens' safety.