

Jurzyca Disagrees with Operators' Initiative to Share the Costs of Building 5G Network with Data Companies

BRATISLAVA, September 19 (SITA) - Slovak MEP (Freedom and Solidarity/SaS) Eugen Jurzyca of the European Conservatives and Reformists does not support the proposal of large telecommunication operators that digital companies, which generate the largest amount of Internet data transfers, should contribute a fair share to the development of telecommunication networks, including 5G. "I do not consider it effective; therefore neither fair, necessary nor correct," the MEP said to the initiative of the association of the largest European telecommunication operators ETNO. Jurzyca rather thinks that the said "taxation" would be a violation of the concept of net neutrality, i.e. the non-discriminatory treatment of all data during transmission in networks as well as the principle of not blocking individual websites, services or applications.

"But it is an economic problem, not a legal one," Jurzyca noted. According to the MEP, it would be strange and ineffective if the state or the EU were to force the largest car manufacturers by law to contribute additionally to the expansion of the gas station network, for example. "That's exactly what the operators are trying to do. What they are able to get on the free market is not enough for them, they try to lobby for more through the laws. Nothing new under the sun," Jurzyca pointed out. In his opinion, it is precisely because of such regulations that the EU lags behind the USA, for instance, and it does not have its own successful company giants in many sectors.

"Instead of trying to create the conditions for successful big (digital) companies to be established here, we are just trying to squeeze out the US ones. Maybe the majority of voters like it, but history teaches us that this does not always mean that it is good," the MEP pointed out. Telecommunication companies are already using extensive government or European subsidies to launch very high capacity networks in areas with insufficient coverage. "There are situations when infrastructure such as roads, sewers, telecommunication networks really have the characteristics of public goods and co-financing by the state is rational. But trying to force other market participants by the law to pay more seems wrong to me," Jurzyca added.