

As world first, Finland makes broadband service basic right

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An aerial view of the port in Helsinki, Finland on Thursday became the first country in the world to make access to a broadband service a basic right, ensuring that a high-speed Internet connection is available to all Finns, a government official said.

Finland on Thursday became the first country in the world to make access to a broadband service a basic right, ensuring that a high-speed Internet connection is available to all Finns, a government official said.

"Today the universal service obligation concerning Internet access of one Megabit per second (Mbit/s) has entered into force," Olli-Pekka Rantala of the [communications networks](#) unit at the ministry of transport and communications said.

"It is our understanding that we have become the first in the world to have made broadband a basic right," he added.

The tech-savvy Nordic country amended its communications market act last year to make sufficient Internet access a universal service, such as the telephone and postal services.

It was later determined by the ministry of communications "that what is meant by sufficient Internet access ... is one Megabit per second." Rantala said.

Finnish Communications Minister Suvi Linden called the new mandatory [broadband](#) regulation "one of the government's most significant achievements in regional policy."

"I'm proud of it," she said in a statement. "I hope that people will make use of the opportunity and turn to [telecom operators](#) in the area they live."

From July 1, service providers in Finland are thus obligated to provide a one Mbit/s connection to all Finnish households, regardless of their location.

The Finnish Communications Regulatory Authority (FICORA) was in charge of designating universal service providers for areas where a high speed connection was not previously available.

The service obligation does not apply to summer residences, FICORA said on its website.

It added the price of an Internet connection provided by a universal service provider "must be reasonable," but that the provider could take into consideration "the costs incurred from the production of the service."

The Finnish government has also launched a project to connect all Finns

to the Internet with fast fibre-optic or cable networks by 2015.

"The objective of the project is that nearly all (more than 99 percent of the) permanent places of residence and places of business and public administration are no further than two kilometres from a 100 Mbit/s fibre-optic cable network," FICORA said.

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