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Dear Mr Georgescu,

On behalf of Vice-President Neelie Kroes, I would like you to thank you for drawing our attention to the issue of broadband penetration in Romania in your letter of 15 July.

The Commission takes the issue of broadband gaps in rural and remote areas very seriously and is continuing with the work launched at the conference you attended on Bridging the Broadband Gap. In May this year the Commission adopted the Digital Agenda for Europe which sets out its strategy for the information society and forms part of President Barroso's Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. With regard to broadband, Europe 2020 sets the target that all Europeans will be reached by a broadband network by 2013.

Much remains to be done if Europe is to achieve this target and the Commission is currently working on a Communication setting out how the Digital Agenda will be implemented with respect to broadband. The Commission already supports the construction of broadband infrastructure and internet take up through both the rural and structural funds. In the 2007-2013 programming period for the structural funds, around €12.9 billion was allocated to information society services and €2.3 billion to broadband infrastructure. €1 billion was added to the rural development funds as part of the economic recovery plan and could be used for broadband projects. The Commission is aware, however, that only part of these funds were successfully allocated to broadband projects. The forthcoming Communication on broadband will set out how this can be improved.

Concerning the specific issue you raise in your letter, rest assured that we will follow this closely together with our colleagues from the Directorate-General for Regional Policy who have primary responsibility on this dossier.


Ken Ducatel
Head of Unit