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## **SABER To Help Local Authorities Bridge Digital Divide Using Satellite**

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The SABER project announced that it will publish practical guidelines in April to help regional authorities specify, procure and fund satellite broadband solutions to assist the 10 million EU households currently trapped in the Digital Divide to access broadband services.

The announcement follows the SABER project's first best practice workshop in Cork on February 19th, which brought together representatives from 21 regional authorities across Europe, satellite experts and key influencers such as Philippe Lefebvre, of the European Commission DG CONNECT and Roya Ayazi, Secretary General of NEREUS (Network of European Regions Using Space Technologies).

Led by CSI Piemonte, the 24-month SABER project is partially EU-funded and involves 26 partners including Eutelsat, SES Broadband Services, Astrium, and 21 regional authorities and ICT public and private organizations supporting regions in broadband deployment representing 13 countries. UK and Ireland partners in the SABER project include Devon County Council, New Economy Manchester, South West Regional Authority, Mid West Regional Authority and Sli Nua Development in Ireland.

"Access to high speed broadband is a critical infrastructure requirement for European business growth, education and social interaction and yet 10 million EU homes are today still without access, with those in rural areas particularly suffering," said Stefano Agnelli, Director of European Institutional Affairs, at Eutelsat. "Satellite broadband is a fast and cost effective solution available today to assist those digitally deprived communities and SABER's role is to help regional authorities to benefit from this solution and to provide advice on how to deploy it in the most effective way for their communities."

"With our 26 expert project partners, that have vast experience in all aspects of broadband delivery and in publicly-funded programmes, I would urge any EU regional authorities with broadband issues to get involved."

The results of the SABER project will be shared at workshops and through the project's website. For further information visit: [www.project-saber.eu](http://www.project-saber.eu)