

Review of Universal Service Policies in the European Union

- SVP advisors assisted a telecom incumbent in examining potential implications of the European Commission review of Universal Service Obligations (USO) and defining the incumbent's position in the process. Our investigation focused on topics of special relevance such as the potential inclusion of broadband and mobile services within the scope of USO, the central issue of how USO should be funded, and the relevance of the formal separation of access and service layers.
- Based on extensive research into the current status of the US regulatory framework and an in-depth review of the arguments and proposals put forward by academics, regulators and operators, our experts reflected on the role and concept of universal service in the 21st Century. The implications of technological and market developments for the universal service framework were examined, including the expansion of mobile telephony, the move towards Next Generation Networks, increasing competition levels, or alternatively the potentially diminishing importance of public telephony.
- Disparities among EU countries were also investigated to understand the limitations that such disparities impose on the search for a unified USO regulatory framework at European level.
- A workshop was held to discuss the main findings of the study. Together with the client, a common understanding was reached about how current trends are making the current USO framework obsolete and the implications for different industry agents.

Conditions justifying public intervention for provision of telecoms services

