

14 October 2011

BEREC Office is inaugurated in full operational capacity in its permanent location in Riga, Latvia



On the photo (from left to the right): Mr **Ando REHEMAA** - BEREC Office Administrative Manager; H.E. Mr **Valdis DOMBROVSKIS** - Prime Minister of Latvia; H.E. Mr **Andris BĒRZIŅŠ** - President of Latvia; Mrs **Neelie KROES** - Vice-President of the Commission; Mr **Chris FONTEIJN** - BEREC Chair and Chair of OPTA and NMa; Ms **Inna ŠTEINBUKA** - Head of the Representation of the Commission in Latvia

The President of Latvia, Andris Bērziņš, the Vice-President of the European Commission and Commissioner for Digital Agenda, Neelie Kroes, the Prime Minister of Latvia, Valdis Dombrovskis, and the Chair of BEREC for 2011, Chris Fonteijn, together with other distinguished guests today inaugurated the Office of the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC Office) in its full operational capacity in its new premises in Riga, Latvia.

Andris Bērziņš, the President of the Republic of Latvia, in his opening speech said that the BEREC Office

opening in Riga is an important event not only for Latvia, but also for the European Union, as demonstrated by the active involvement of the European Commission in establishing the Office. It was stated that Latvia is committed to providing excellent conditions for the Office to fulfill its assignment and in that respect the President expressed his hope that the positive results of the Office work will show Latvia as an outstanding place for common European projects.

Neelie Kroes, Vice-President of the European Commission and Commissioner responsible for Digital Agenda for Europe said: "BEREC has a crucial role to play in improving the consistency and transparency of regulatory action in telecoms markets, and the dissemination of best practices across Member States. The opening of BEREC's Office is a prerequisite for it to carry out its challenging role effectively, independently, and successfully."

Chris Fonteijn, Chair of BEREC for 2011 emphasised: "BEREC is currently developing its own strategic agenda with a three to five year horizon to become one of the cornerstones of broader digital and internet policy. The support of BEREC Office in this ambition is indispensable. Therefore I am very happy that BEREC Office has gained autonomy and is coming up to speed."

The opening ceremony in Riga was visited by numerous Europeans active in the electronic communications sector. The visitors used this occasion to exchange views about the strategy outlook for telecom regulation in Europe.

BEREC will complement national regulators with an EU-level regulatory oversight and ensure the consistent application in all Member States of the EU regulatory framework for electronic

communications, thereby contributing to the development of the internal market. BEREC is responsible for:

- Developing and disseminating among national regulators regulatory best practice;
- Providing assistance to national regulators (upon request);
- Delivering expert opinions on Regulatory Framework;
- Issuing reports, providing advice to Commission, delivering opinions to European Parliament and Council (upon request).

BEREC Office is established as a European body with legal personality. It will provide professional and administrative support to BEREC, collect information, exchange and disseminate regulatory best practices among national regulators. It is the first and currently the only European Agency in Latvia.

The Agency will hire in total 28 staff members from all EU members states who will be based in Riga with their families. The planned budget for 2012 of the BEREC Office will amount to 4,44 mln EUR.

Background:

The Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC) and the Office (BEREC Office) were created within the recently approved reform in the field of electronic communications, with the objective to increase the consistency in the implementation of the EU regulatory framework and thus to improve the functioning of the single market. BEREC replaced the European Regulators Group (ERG) through which the National Regulatory Authorities (NRAs) used to exchange expertise and best practice and gave opinions on the functioning of the telecoms market in the EU.

The new regulatory framework for electronic communications networks and services includes provisions for the proper functioning of the markets, the procedures and powers of NRAs in addressing their primary objectives of promoting competition, contributing to the development of the European market and promoting the interests of the European citizens. The regulatory package consists of 5 Directives and a Regulation. The Directives with recent amendments have been transposed into national law by Member States by 25 May 2011. The Regulation does not need such transposition by Member States and is directly applicable in all Member States as of the date of its entry into force.

More information about the functions and activities of BEREC and its Office can be found:

1. At the BEREC web page: <http://berec.europa.eu/>

2. In the Regulation (EC) No 1211/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2009 establishing the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC) and the Office Text with EEA relevance, *Official Journal L 337, 18/12/2009 P. 0001 - 0010*

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/Notice.do?mode=dbl&lang=en&lng1=en.lv&lng2=bg.cs.da.de.el.en.es.et.fi.fr.ga.hu.it.lt.lv.mt.nl.pl.pt.ro.sk.sl.sv.&val=505814:cs&page=1&hwords=> (available also in Latvian)

3. Current EU regulatory framework for electronic communications:

http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/policy/ecommu/eu-rules/index_en.htm