

PRESS RELEASE

**4th BEREC Stakeholder Forum
Enhancing connectivity and innovation in Europe**

On 17 October 2016, the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC) held its 4th Stakeholder Forum in Brussels, which gathered together around 160 participants from the digital and telecoms sectors. The main topics discussed during the Forum were connectivity challenges in Europe and the digital economy; two major topics in the context of the review of the Regulatory Framework and the BEREC Work Programme 2017.

After an introduction by the current BEREC Chair, Wilhelm Eschweiler, the incoming BEREC Chair for 2017, Sébastien Soriano, gave opening remarks highlighting the role BEREC will play in 2017 to contribute to the priorities set by the EU institutions for the telecoms sector. In its Work Programme 2017, Mr. Soriano reminded the Forum that BEREC will be committed to pave the way for a pro-investment regulatory environment based on competition, which will enhance fixed and mobile connectivity. Preserving an open environment in the telecoms and digital sectors, which is critical to empower end-users, new entrants and innovation, will be another top priority for BEREC next year.

The Forum continued with the first roundtable, moderated by Sharon White, Chief Executive of Ofcom, where an open discussion on how to enhance connectivity in Europe took place. The role of competition in fostering investment and thus providing the best connectivity to every citizen was highlighted by the speakers. In particular, they agreed that “Fibre is the end game”, although different views were expressed on the need to promote transitory solutions in the meantime. The importance of the use of radio spectrum and a consistent Regulatory Framework to facilitate this was also stressed during the discussion. The necessity to adapt regulation to the challenges of our time was mentioned, underlining the importance of the current review.

The first panel of speakers was composed of Pilar del Castillo, Member of the European Parliament; Eelco Blok, CEO of KPN; Xavier Niel, Deputy Chairman of the Board of Directors & Chief Strategy Officer of Iliad; Sam Crawford, Founder of SamKnows.

The second roundtable, moderated by Johannes Gunzl, Managing Director of RTR, was dedicated to the development of the digital economy and its interaction with the telecoms sector. During this session, the panel emphasised the importance of convergence between

networks and content, as well as the value of partnerships between telcos and start-ups to stimulate innovation. The central role of end-users and regulation -in particular net neutrality rules - in the digital economy was highlighted.

This second roundtable included Gavin Patterson, CEO of BT Group; Martin Kaiser, VP Services Division at Hager Group; Annina Koskiola, CEO of Proximi.io; Winston Maxwell, renowned expert in net neutrality.

During his closing remarks, Commissioner Oettinger agreed that regulators will play an important part in the digital transformation. He also stressed the need to have a strong telecoms sector for Europe to be able to deliver the Gigabit Society by 2025. The adoption of the proposal for a European Electronic Communications Code without delay, together with new spectrum rules, will be crucial in this regard. Commissioner Oettinger reminded the Forum of the strategic role that BEREC will play in this process.

More information on the event and the recorded video is available [here](#).