



BoR (17) 131

BEREC – EMERG – EaPeReg - REGULATEL SUMMIT
CONNECTING REGIONS
ENSURING CONNECTIVITY IN A CONVERGENT WORLD
CASCAIS, PORTUGAL | 31 MAY 2017

DECLARATION

The Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC) and its counterparts from the Euro-Mediterranean Regulators Group (EMERG), the Eastern Partnership Electronic Communications Regulators Network (EaPeReg) and the Latin American Forum of Telecommunications Regulators (REGULATEL) have met in Cascais, on May 31st, for the high level BEREC-EMERG-EaPeReg-REGULATEL Summit. Representatives from the European Commission and from the BEREC Office were also present. The meeting has been hosted by the Portuguese National Communications Authority (ANACOM).

This Summit aimed at addressing the main challenges deriving from ensuring connectivity in a convergent world. In this context, the representatives from the different regulators networks recalled that:

- We are facing a fast changing world, everything and everyone being increasingly connected, which bring higher requirements for very high capacity networks, wide coverage, high speed and high-quality experience, as well as service ubiquity and mobility.
- Consumer needs and habits are also changing radically. In contrast to traditional fixed and mobile voice communications, there is a progressive increase in the digital communications and services offered and consumed over the Internet, accessible through a series of connected devices.
- While gaining awareness of the benefits for the whole society stemming from new and innovative services, we shall effectively address the existence or even the broadening of the digital divide in this fast changing environment which remains as a challenge.
- Indeed, broadband connectivity is of strategic importance for growth and innovation in all sectors of the economy and for social and territorial cohesion. There is a clear challenge of financing a good quality and affordable broadband infrastructure, in

both rural and urban areas and in all sectors of society, which require substantial investments.

- It is competition and demand for services that drive investment in infrastructure, as competition helps ensuring conditions to investment and innovation and provides for maximum benefit in terms of choice, price and quality. This will increase demand, which in turn will generate, in a virtuous circle, new incentives for investment and innovation. However, competition may not solve all connectivity problems, in particular in rural areas. So, there must be a role for specific public intervention such as universal service, state aid (public funds), and public projects, in order to meet social objectives of access to basic connectivity and to basic services independently of geographical location, and to help achieving universal coverage of high-performance networks in areas where investment by operators would not otherwise occur commercially.
- The demand for radio networks has never been so significant, as we need to assure the forecast development of mobile broadband and voice services, as well as of the new services technologies deriving from the Internet of Things (IoT), Big Data, artificial intelligence and cloud services. As radio spectrum is essential to ensure mobile connectivity, in particular to achieve higher levels of coverage as well as the introduction of new broadband services in a timely manner, it is necessary to guarantee its availability for innovative services such as 5G.
- It is also important to promote the open Internet principle, recognizing that it is of every citizen the right to access and distribute Internet contents or application of its own choice, without discrimination or unjustified blocking or slowing down.
- In this environment, the role of the regulators becomes more important than ever, since it is aimed at providing certainty and confidence to investors, creating the best conditions for competition and in turn for investment, assuring at the same time the highest levels of protection and empowerment of end users.
- At the same time, it is clear that the global dimension of the digital ecosystem will pose more and more similar challenges to national regulators. This means that a closer cooperation and exchange of expertise and best practices among national regulators and regional platforms will become more strategic in the coming years.

As an example of regional collaboration in facing the challenges posed by the new digital economy, participants recalled the recent initiatives related to the connectivity objectives, not only the Digital Single Market Strategy of the European Union, but also the regional Digital Market Initiative for Latin America. On the same basis, it is worth mentioning other initiatives recently discussed at the level of the EaPeReg, such as the EU4Digital: Telecom Action Plan 2017-2020. Besides the EMERG approved its 2017 Work Plan including connectivity as a horizontal topic, relevant from different



perspectives Moreover, REGULATEL devoted the annual meeting of its working groups to discuss about different aspects of connectivity in the region and in Europe. The main outcome of the meeting was a document on “Connectivity in Latin America: fostering investment, challenges and experiences”. In addition, a line of research on ‘Indicators to connectivity’ is open within REGULATEL work plan for 2017.

Finally, taking into account the cross-border nature of the digital ecosystem, the joint work of BEREC, EMERG, EaPeReg and REGULATEL becomes more relevant than ever. Thus, the Summit participants recalled the cooperative principles enshrined at the Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) already signed between BEREC and its counterparts from EMERG, EaPeReg and REGULATEL, recognizing the common interest of renovating the activities included in them.

In this context, BEREC, EMERG, REGULATEL and EaPeReg declare that:

- In our fast innovative world, there are common challenges, namely those related to connectivity in a digital and broaden ecosystem, which require to be addressed in order to allow citizens and businesses fully benefiting from the digital economy. At this point, regulators shall play a crucial role in promoting competition as the best way to spur the necessary investments by the sector, and helping to achieve coverage in commercially less attractive areas, where there is little demand and the costs of rolling out the networks is high.
- Regulators shall also seek dialogue and cooperation at the level of order radio networks for innovative services such as Internet of things and 5G.
- Net neutrality issues deserve particular attention and, in order to comply with the open Internet principle, at both technical and commercial levels regulators shall seek to share best practices, in particular regarding the tools and methods developed in the context of the Internet access service to deal with quality of service monitoring and performance assessment.
- There is a major common benefit deriving from the cooperative dialogue on common issues between regulators from Europe and other regions of the World, namely Latin America, North Africa and Middle East, as well as Eastern Europe, as challenges and solutions are the same.
- Holding this joint Summit was a clear evidence of that benefit, assuming that it is a fundamental opportunity to promote the needed regulatory dialogue, based on fair and added valued discussions. Building upon the already existent cooperative liaisons and noting the financial support provided by the European Commission, this Summit recognized the benefit of promoting permanent initiatives of cooperation celebrated between BEREC and its counterparts of EMERG, EaPeReg and REGULATEL. The success of the Summit will ensure to frame future common initiatives, such as promoting joint working groups,



information sharing and maintaining this high level regulatory dialogue through future meetings.

Cascais, May 31st, 2017.

Sébastien Soriano
2017 BEREC Chair

Angelo Cardani
2017 EMERG Chair

Grigore Varanita
2017 EaPeReg Chair

Rodrigo Ramírez Pino
2017 REGULATEL Chair