

BEREC Summary Report on the status of internet capacity, regulatory and other measures in light of the Covid-19 crisis

In a joint statement with the European Commission, on 19 March 2020, on how network operators can cope with the increased demand of network capacity, BEREC committed to a special reporting mechanism to ensure regular monitoring of the Internet traffic situation in each Member State, in order to be able to respond swiftly to capacity issues. Furthermore, BEREC is collecting information on other measures implemented by National Regulatory Authorities (NRAs) as well as on other initiatives by public and private parties throughout Europe.

This report focuses on, and summarises, the main updates of an ongoing, weekly information gathering exercise, and includes the most recent data provided to BEREC by its constituent NRAs as of 12 May 2020. 32¹ NRAs have shared their data about the impact of the crisis on electronic communications networks and the actions taken so far in their respective Member States.

Please refer to the previous iteration of this summary report for further details on some of the early measures applied by NRAs during the crisis.

The summary report will continue to be updated based on regular input from NRAs, with the next summary report due to be published on 22 May 2020.

1. Status of internet capacity

In general, traffic on fixed and mobile networks has increased during the Covid-19 crisis, but no major congestion issues have occurred.

9 NRAs² have provided updates on the status of internet capacity in their Member State since the previous information gathering exercise (5 May 2020). Please refer to previous iterations of the internet capacity summary report for further details on some of the early measures applied by NRAs during the crisis.

¹ The following NRAs have contributed so far to the information gathering exercises: AL, AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, ME, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, RS, SE, SI, SK.

² NRAs from the following Member States having provided updates since the previous data gathering exercise: BG, CY, HU, IT, LU, PL, PT, RS, SI.

Key updates since previous report

- *BG has reported that overall internet traffic remains stable from both a quality and volume perspective. PL has also confirmed that the overall traffic remains stable;*
- *CY and IT have provided updates on the evolution of internet traffic on fixed and mobile networks;*
- *LU has registered a slight decrease in overall internet traffic, while PT has confirmed the decreasing trend;*
- *RS has informed about its activities during the Covid-19 pandemic;*
- *HU has reduced the frequency of collecting data from operators;*
- *SI has reported that measures will be gradually relaxed and that traffic is still under control.*

1.1. Network issues raised by NRAs

In general, three phases in the evolution of internet traffic have been observed during the crisis: sharp increase, stabilisation and a decrease from the peak.

The following updates on the status of internet traffic have been reported:

CY has reported that data traffic on mobile networks slightly increased in the week of 27 April-3 May 2020 compared to the week of 20-26 April 2020, while the fixed data traffic remained stable compared to the same period.

After a slight increase in the first weeks, IT registered a stabilisation both for mobile data traffic (average volume + 29% in the lockdown period – week 11-18) and fixed (average volume + 57% in the lockdown period). In the last 2 weeks internet traffic is decreasing.

BG and PL have reported that overall traffic remained stable compared to the previous week. BG also stressed that there is a good quality of service. PT has confirmed that overall internet traffic continues to decrease, although only slightly.

LU reported that mobile data traffic is decreasing to the same levels as before the crisis. The majority of fixed network operators reported a decrease in traffic corresponding to a level which is now only 10% higher than before the crisis. The same NRA has observed that the national and international data interconnection traffic reached a similar level than before the crisis.

1.2. Regulatory actions taken

NRAs are monitoring the situation and are regularly collecting data from ISPs and other market players about the status of their networks.

HU has reported that they reduced the frequency of collecting data from twice to once a week, while LU has confirmed that they continue to monitor the traffic every second day. ES has reported that they reduced the frequency of collecting data from operators from daily to once a week.

RS launched a campaign on social media to express gratitude to telecom operators for their additional efforts made during the state of emergency.

1.3. Actions taken and communication by operators

PT has reported that one ISP reinforced the capacity on the GPRS roaming exchange.

RS has mentioned that operators provided increased network capacity to cope with the increase in traffic and that the operators granted their customers access to specific content free of charge.

1.4. Further communication towards end-users

RS has reported that they issued recommendations for users on optimal internet usage at the end of March 2020.

PT has launched a practical guide to inform the users of electronic communications services about their rights in the current situation.

2. Other measures taken by NRAs, public institutions and market players

Key updates since previous report

- *PL has reported that its spectrum auction procedure (for the 3400-3800 MHz band) and the release of the 700 MHz band had been suspended;*
- *AT reports the resumption of work on the spectrum auction for the 700 MHz, 1500 MHz and 2.1 GHz bands, which is now scheduled for the 2nd half of August 2020;*
- *LT has issued a press release on the impact of 5G technology, addressing misinformation on the claimed links between 5G and Covid-19;*
- *Both IE and PL have shared information on new Bluetooth-based Covid-19 tracing apps.*

Measures to monitor the spread of Covid-19 BEREC has asked NRAs if there are any applications/solutions in place in their Member State in order to monitor the spread of Covid-19. As of 12 May, nineteen NRAs have responded to that question, with thirteen NRAs indicating that there is indeed at least one such application/solution in place in the Member

State. Of the other responding NRAs, three³ indicated that while no such application/solution is currently in place, there are plans in place to launch such applications/solutions in their Member State.

In AT, an application is offered by the Austrian Red Cross to manage contacts and to stop the chain of infections. An application called 'Andrija' is available in HR, which is not intended to track or monitor individuals, but to offer guidance on self-assessment. In CZ, 'eMask' ('eRouska') collects data about the proximity of other 'eMask' apps (via Bluetooth) and individuals can be anonymously informed regarding coming into contact with a person that has tested positive for Covid-19.

Two measures in use in DK are 'COVIDmeter' and 'SmitteSTOP'. There are initiatives under way in DE which monitor shifts and directions of mobility and check the extent of compliance of the population with the obligations imposed by the federal states. In IT, several regional applications were used to facilitate remote contacts with doctors and health infrastructures; the government approved the use of an application for contact tracing ("Immuni").. In LT, the application 'Karantinas' has been launched to assist those citizens who have to remain in strict isolation at home. An obligatory application called 'Home Quarantine' has been launched in PL, as has the voluntary 'ProteGo' application which allows users to self-diagnose. In ES, a self-assessment application and a mobility study have been implemented, with a tracing application in development. In TR, an application ('Hayat Eve Sığar-Life Fits Home') has been developed that provides a risk assessment to users based on their location.

Other solutions currently offered include in BE where telecommunications data (across the three major mobile operators) is used to determine the impact of quarantine (mobility). In ME, the government publishes online that names of citizens who are obliged to personally isolate for a period of two weeks. In SK, localisation data on citizens who have tested positive for Covid-19 is monitored by the government based on information from mobile operators.

³ Three additional NRAs, while responding to the question, effectively indicated they had no substantial information to provide.