NEWSLETTER

Highlights and activities for Weeks 1 to 5, 2015 (01.01.15 – 30.01.15)

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A. International Meetings attended by MCA

1. **BEREC – WG – Market & Economic Analysis (MEA)**
The MCA attended this meeting on January 7th, organised by BEREC's MEA working group in Brussels. The discussion focused on the BEREC report on oligopoly analysis and regulation, which is currently being drafted by a number of experts from this working group. It is envisaged that this report will be published for public consultation in the third quarter of 2015, prior to the final publication of the report at the end of this year.

During the meeting reference was made to the organisation of a public workshop on oligopolies, mergers and acquisitions by BEREC in February, aimed at collecting input from stakeholders on their views regarding the topics that are addressed in the BEREC report.

B. MCA Publications & Website Uploads

1. **Press Release: Feasibility study for the establishment of a new Submarine Cable Link**

   Published 30th January: http://www.mca.org.mt/sites/default/files/attachments/notices/2015/PR%20-Feasibility%20study%20Submarine%20Cable.pdf

2. **Business Perception Survey Results – Electronic Communications**

   Published 30th January: http://www.mca.org.mt/sites/default/files/attachments/surveys/2015/150130-electronic-communication-services-business-survey-results-part-1.pdf.pdf

3. **Press Release: Project ENTER for Migrants and Support Workers**

   Published 30th January: http://www.mca.org.mt/sites/default/files/attachments/notices/2015/PR%20-%20ICT%20Courses%20Migrants.pdf

4. **Notice & Announcement: Information Session: EU funded R&I project opportunities**

   Published 27th January: http://www.mca.org.mt/notices-and-announcements/information-session-eu-funded-ri-project-opportunities

5. **Notice & Announcement: A single Market for Digital Content: Economic Opportunities for Malta**

   Published 23th January: http://www.mca.org.mt/notices-and-announcements/single-market-digital-content-economic-opportunities-malta

6. **Press Release: MCA awards €19,968 to a promising technology start-up: TAKEOFF incubator to support idea development and commercialisation**

   Published 23rd January: http://www.mca.org.mt/notices-and-announcements/mca-awards-eur-19968-promising-technology-start-takeoff-incubator-support

7. Internet and eCommerce Usage Study – May 2014

Published 22nd January: The study established that 54% of all respondents (including those who don't use Internet) engage in eCommerce, up from 51% in 2010 and 30% in 2008. Indeed, the majority (55%) of those who use Internet have bought something online within the previous three months. Only 25% have never bought anything or commissioned others to buy for them, despite going online themselves. The frequency of purchases is also significant, with 28% buying online at least once a month and 34% buying at least once every three months. Compared to previous years, the frequency has gone up especially for monthly buying.

http://www.mca.org.mt/sites/default/files/attachments/surveys/2015/Internet%20and%20eCommerce%20Use%20by%20Individuals%20Survey_2014.pdf

8. Response to Questions received by the deadline of the 5th January 2015 as established in section 7 of the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the use of Malta's ITU-allotted satellite slots dated 13 November 2014

On Friday 16th January, the MCA published responses to the questions received by the deadline of the 5th January 2014 as established in section 7 of the RFP for the use of Malta's ITU-allotted satellite slots dated 13 November 2014 (reference MCA/O/14-2015).

http://www.mca.org.mt/notices-and-announcements/response-questions-received-deadline-5th-january-2014-established-section

9. Broadband Quality of Service Framework – Data Formatting

On Friday 9th January, the MCA published for consultation a proposed decision titled "Broadband QoS Framework - Data Formatting", putting forward a proposal intended to harmonise how QoS data is presented by Internet Service Providers to their end-users. The consultation period shall run from the 9th January 2015 to the 27th February 2015.
MCA Reference:
MCA/C/14-2074

http://www.mca.org.mt/consultations/broadband-qos-framework-data-formatting

10. Decisions issued by the MCA in year 2014

On 7th January 2015, MCA published a list of decisions issued by it in 2014.

http://www.mca.org.mt/notices-and-announcements/decisions-issued-mca-year-2014

C. MCA Events

1. Press Release: Feasibility study for the establishment of a new Submarine Cable Link

31st January: Malta's broadband Internet readiness is becoming increasingly pivotal in influencing the nation's global competitiveness. Over the past few years new developments in international connectivity not only helped reinforce Malta's position as the leading EU jurisdiction in the knowledge economy sector, but also led the financial and various other service-based industries to make great strides. The Malta Communications Authority is embarking on detailed technical, economical, and financial feasibility study for a new submarine cable connecting Malta to other alternative locations with the objective of enhancing the resilience and quality of the current international electronic communications connectivity. The aim of the study is to identify the best strategies for deployment and compare the various models and recommendations for the optimal technical, commercial and financial solution. The study is being financed by Technical Assistance funds from the European Regional Development Cohesion Fund. By means of this study, the Authority will ensure that Malta's connectivity is efficient and competitive, offering the best services at the best price, thus contributing to the improvement of the country's competitiveness.

2. Press Conference: Project ENTER for Migrants & Support Workers

29th January: As part of its continuous drive to reduce gaps in ICT usage, the Malta Communications Authority (MCA), is working on a number of initiatives aimed at supporting social cohesion and eInclusion. These initiatives are designed to deliver tangible benefits to citizens such as improved skills, better employability, increased quality of life and strengthened community cohesion.

Whilst a good number of initiatives have already been delivered, some of which are still ongoing, our efforts are now targeting specific niche groups, one of which is migrants. Each year Malta takes in a significant number of immigrants and refugees, each originating from different countries and with multicultural and diversified ethnic backgrounds. They individually face several types of difficulties in adjusting and integrating fully into their adopted society. The MCA is therefore committed to supporting the Government in the implementation of its integration policy by helping refugees to acquire sufficient knowledge in the use of ICT thus providing additional skills to facilitate their integration into our society. The MCA is extending the ICT training programme launched in 2013 under the 'ENTER' programme to the *Foundation for Shelter and Support to Migrants* (FSM), which was specifically setup to provide services for the residents. This training programme aims to provide basic and advanced training to individuals aged 25 years and over to both the FSM residents and support workers.

3. Information Session: EU funded R&I project opportunities

26th January: In the context of its role of advancing innovation and development within the digital communications sector, on Monday 26th January, the Malta Communications Authority (MCA) organised an Information Session aimed at highlighting the numerous opportunities offered by EU funded R&I projects.

This event focussed on presenting the current sector-specific funding and collaborative project opportunities available under the Horizon 2020 Framework Programme for Research & Innovation. It also offered participants the opportunity to contribute to the ensuing discussion and gather further knowledge from organisations present which are already reaping the benefits offered by EU R&I collaborative projects. With a budget of nearly €80 billion over the period 2014-2020, the Horizon 2020 is the biggest Research & Innovation programme ever launched to date in the European Union.

4. Innovation Network Meeting: A single market for Digital Content 'Economic Opportunities for Malta'

22nd January: A number of experts and stakeholders in the fields of communications, business and foreign investment met on Thursday 22nd January to discuss the distribution of digital content within the Digital Single Market and related economic opportunities for Malta. Developments in the single market especially in dealing with taxation, copyright and net neutrality, and how this is impacting the digital content market were explored. The discussion also focused on a number of initial considerations that could potentially shape Malta's value proposition in making it more attractive for investment in this fast-evolving environment.

5. MCA TAKEOFF Awards

20th January: InboundMuse is the first start-up to benefit from the MCA TAKEOFF Award and was presented with a seed fund of €19,968, during a ceremony held on Tuesday 20th January. The Award is a joint initiative between the Malta Communications Authority (MCA) and the University of Malta as a result of a collaboration agreement signed between both organisations in October 2014.

The award was presented to InboundMuse founders Mr Tyron Lloyd Baron and Mr Neville Bezzina by Dr Edward Woods, Chairman of the MCA and Professor Juanito Camilleri, Rector of the University of Malta. This award is aimed at supporting local start-ups in the development of innovative business ideas in communications, with a view to take such ideas to the commercialisation stage. Through the campus-based TAKEOFF Incubation Centre, the University will support the project by offering office facilities and dedicated business mentorship. Thirteen very interesting start-up ideas were in competition for this funding. Topping the list, InboundMuse proposed the development of a Software-as-a-Service solution through which business clients, particularly SMEs, are given the tools to monitor their inbound-marketing strategies. The idea promises to provide business value by leveraging on Artificial Intelligence (AI) to exploit big data - data which is too large and complex to be processed cost-effectively by humans.

6. Conference Preparatory Group (CPG)

13 – 16th January: The MCA hosted the 6th meeting of Project Team A within the Conference Preparatory Group (CPG) of the Electronic Communications Committee (ECC), which was held in Sliema between the 13 and 16 January 2015. The MCA will also be hosting the next meeting of the CPG which will be held in Floriana between the 3rd and 6th February 2015. This meeting is expected to be attended by around 130

participants.   The CPG is responsible for developing briefs, studies, and European Common Proposals (ECPs) for the 2015 World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC-15). Project Team A (PTA) deals with specific agenda items of WRC-15, which include science related services, nano-satellites and disaster relief applications. The PTA meeting was attended by 58 participants.

7. **WebCheck Hotels Closing Seminar**

14th January: The Malta Communications Authority (MCA) together with Malta Tourism Authority (MTA) recently worked together on an initiative aimed at enhancing on-line visibility.   The project called *WebCheck* was specifically aimed at helping hotels improve their on-line presence. The MTA saw the potential of this initiative and its benefits for the Maltese hotel industry and assisted the MCA in seeing this project through. In all 31 hotels from 2, 3 and 4-star categories, as well as guest houses, participated in this project. After having their web presence professionally assessed, each hotel received an individual report with suggestions on how to improve their on-line presence. The closing seminar was held on the 14th January at the Westin Dragonara Hotel, where the general findings were presented and case studies explored.   Furthermore a booklet with findings and suggestions called, 'Navigating the Web' was produced and distributed by the MTA and MCA to further the aims of the initiative.

D. Media participation by MCA

MCA media participation to various TV & Radio programmes. As per set procedure, we do our best to get a copy of the recording and upload it to the MCA YouTube Channel.

1. **Television Guest Speakers**

   06.01.15:   'Dak li Jgħodd Għalina – Teens' (Mark Spiteri – BeSmartOnline!)

   08.01.15:   'Ilsien in-Nisa' (Paul Cumbo – eBiz Awards 2014)
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zLUZE6kY7i4&list=PLl8Jd_mlhkWfAUOTWHxViQnL2HGB5vpjB&index=3

2. **Radio**

   The weekly programme 'L-informatika u s-Soċjeta' is one of the many ICT related awareness campaigns led by the IS Unit to target the elderly. MCA was offered air-time free of charge by radju Maria to deliver 13 live radio programmes of 30mins each, held every Wednesday 3.30pm – 4.00pm. Every programme tackles a particular subject related to the use of social media and other online tools. The programmes cover the benefits and risks, and the potential use of social media. The last radio programme is scheduled to be held Wednesday 25th March.

   07.01.15:   'L-Informatika u s-Soċjeta' - Radju Marija

                    (Mark Schembri + Paul Cumbo- *Kif l-ICT jista' jgħin fil-ħajja ta' kuljum*)

   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MbcY-kLPB2U&list=PLl8Jd_mlhkWdTjpHTpRgNg7TTuYgaHX9A&index=2

   14.01.15:   'L-Informatika u s-Soċjeta' – Radju Marija

                    (Steve Agius + Matthew Borg - *L-Internet*)

   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ws6-fzwkkc&list=PLl8Jd_mlhkWdTjpHTpRgNg7TTuYgaHX9A&index=3

   21.01.15:   'Is-Suġġett' – ONE Radio

                    (Mark Spiteri – BeSmartOnline!)

                    https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uEWlckROUJ4&list=PLl8Jd_mlhkWeoYAOphJzPiLiZZ3hNMLJZ&index=7

21.01.15:   'L-Informatika u s-Soċjeta' – Radju Marija

(Mark Schembri + Matthew Borg – Kif tikkomunika onlajn {Skype, chat, email})

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pxQdYrA8bWs&list=PLl8Jd_mlhkWdTjpHTpRgNg7TTuYgaHX9A&index=4

28.01.15:   'L-Informatika u s-Soċjeta' – Radju Marija

(Mark Schembri + Matthew Borg – Kif tikkomunika onlajn {Skype, chat, email})

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sFR5KFJpc7I

E. Legal Updates

1. The issue of an administrative fine of €20 daily backdated to the 21st May, 2014 which fine has been imposed on Melita as per decision dated 7th January 2015 for failing to provide hybrid mobile subscriber statistical information for the 1st Quarter of 2014.

Case Sittings

➔ 19th Jan – Paul Micallef noe vs WE Productions – relating to payments of dues to MCA – continuation of hearing of case.

➔ 20th Jan – Vodafone & GO vs MCA et – contestation of Legal Interception contribution by operators – MCA presented its evidence – case adjourned for continuation of evidence

➔ 22nd Jan – continuation of various appeals [previously before the former Appeals Board] before the Administrative Review Tribunal

Information notice on appeals previously filed with Communications Appellants Board:

I.   81/2014/GV Webwaves vs MCA [contestation of fines for failing to provide quarterly returns]

II. 82/2014/GV Maltacom plc vs MCA [contestation of regulatory decision entitled "introducing carrier selection & carrier pre-selection in Malta" issued in 2004

III. 83/2014/GV Vodafone Malta vs MCA [contestation of a decision taken in 2003 requiring Vodafone to comply with MCA's [then] reference interconnect offer decision

IV. 84/2014/GV Melita Cable plc vs MCA [contestation of MCA's Broadband Wireless Assignment decision taken in 2005]

V.   86/2014/GV GO plc vs MCA [contestation of an administrative fine relating to rejection codes following a dispute between Sky and GO]

VI. 87/2014/GV Melita vs MCA [contestation of gross revenue calculations for 2006]

VII. 89/2014/GV GO plc vs MCA [contestation of a decision entitled "Universal service obligations on electronic communications services" issued in April 2010]

VIII. 90/2014/GV Mobisle Communications Ltd vs MCA [contestation of MCA's GSM assignment process]

The appellants are still considering whether to continue with the following appeals: **:**

I.   85/2014/GV Melita vs MCA

II. 88/2014/GV Melita vs MCA

III. 92/2014/GV Melita vs MCA

Adjourned to the 26th Feb, 2015

The appellant has decided that it wishes to continue with its appeals:

    I.   91/2014/GV Melita vs MCA
    II.   93/2014/GV Melita vs MCA

Adjourned to the 26th Feb 2015

Other Case Sittings

2. 27th Jan – Melita vs MCCAA & MCA – contestation by Melita of a fine imposed by MCCAA with regard to the use of unlimited in various adverts etc – cross-examination by Melita of DG(Consumer] – case adjourned to the 24th February, 2015 for the continuation of evidence by MCCAA

F. International News

1. Spectrum

PolicyTracker: More spectrum needed for mobile Asia Pacific by 2020. The Asia Pacific region is heading for a significant spectrum shortfall in 2020 unless regulators take action, according to a report from consultancy Analysys Mason that was jointly commissioned by manufacturer Huawei and mobile association GSMA. [read more – subscription needed]

PolicyTracker: Spectrum Measures to be Removed from Europe's Telecoms Single Market Package. Following scepticism from national telecoms ministries, the new Latvian Presidency of the Council of the EU is set to abandon the measures in the telecoms single market ("connected continent") package designed to partially harmonise spectrum policy. [read more – subscription needed]

Telecoms: Ofcom Launches Consultation on Bands above 6GHz for 5G. Ofcom has launched a consultation seeking industry input on spectrum bands above 6GHz that might be suitable for 5G. The UK regulator said that while it is not yet known what exactly 5G will be, it wants to build an understanding of future spectrum needs. Speeds for 5G are expected to reach 10 to 50 Gbit/s, compared to current average 4G download speed of 15Mbit/s. [read more]

Reuters: U.S. Wireless Spectrum Auction Raises Record $44.9 billion. The U.S. Federal Communications Commission raised a record $44.9 billion in the auction of so-called AWS-3 airwaves that closed on Thursday, marking the highest point yet in the wireless industry's appetite for more spectrum. [read more]

2. Post

Post and Parcel: UK e-retailers to Increase Use of Online Marketplace Sites. A study by Royal Mail suggests that retailers are more likely to make use of online marketplace sites, such as Amazon and eBay. [read more]

Post and Parcel: More City Link Staff Laid Off, as Collapsed Firm's 51 Depots Close. After going into administration and having its assets liquidated, postal courier City Link has announced additional redundancies further to the closure of its 51 depots, which are expected to shut their doors on January 15th, this despite there being 20,000 parcels left to be delivered. [read more]

Post and Parcel: Royal Mail Helps eBay Users Ship Parcels More Conveniently. Click & Drop is a new online postage and label solution to make it easier for eBay sellers to ship parcels using Royal Mail. [read more]

Post and Parcel: Royal Mail Festive Parcel Volumes up 4% in "highly competitive" Market. Royal Mail said today that it saw an improvement in its parcel business during the third quarter, with Christmas volumes up 4% year-on-year. [read more]

3. Mergers and Acquisitions

Total Telecoms: TalkTalk Buys Tesco Broadband, Blinkbox Streaming Service. As part of a major overhaul Tesco has sold its streaming service, BlinkBox, to telecom company TalkTalk for a reported £5m. [read more]

Advanced Television: Facebook Acquires Video Specialist QuickFire Networks. Facebook has acquired video infrastructure specialist QuickFire Networks who owns proprietary infrastructure which it claims could 'dramatically reduce[s]the bandwidth needed to view video online without degrading video quality' [read more]

4. Innovation

National Public Radio: Someday Soon, You May Pay Your Restaurant Bill With A Retina Scan. As the use of biometric data as a means of authenticating a buyer's identity is increasingly adopted, different biometric information is being considered for future technological developments. [read more]

TechCrunch: Google Translate Now Does Real-Time Voice and Sign Translations On Mobile. Google has just released a new app which allows phones to make translations in real time. Users pointing their camera at signs, menus and labels in foreign languages can receive an instant translation on their phone screen. The app also offers real time voice translation which can come in useful during a conversation with two different languages. [read more]

5. Telecoms

Telecoms.com: T-Mobile Netherlands to cheapen cost of EU roaming. The Dutch subsidiary of T-Mobile will be offering reduced roaming rates as of next week. These will include unlimited texts and up to 2 hours of free calls made while roaming. Although customers must still pay for data, it will be much less expensive than data plans offered by competitors. [read more]

Advanced Television: European Commission Seeks Views on UHF Spectrum Use. Following the Lamy report, a document which proposes several suggestions as to what should be done with the 700MHz once it has been freed, the European Commission has initiated a consultation with the aim of seeking views from citizens, academia, industry and other stakeholders. The consultation will be open until 12th April 2015. [read more]

Cullen: Telecoms Single Market: Parliament Maintains Stance on Abolition of Retail Roaming Charges. [read more – subscription needed]

Cullen International Telecoms Single Market: Council Presidency Proposes Roaming Allowance and Review of Wholesale Rates by Mid-2018. [read more – subscription needed]

TechnoBuffalo: WhatSim Promises Unlimited WhatsApp Messaging for Just €10 Per Year. WhatsApp rose to huge popularity in Europe and around the world by offering a free alternative to SMS on your smartphone, but you still need a cell or Wi-Fi signal to connect. Now, one company is stepping in with a specialized SIM that promises to provide unlimited messaging for just €10 per year. [read more]

Advanced Television: Sky to Enter Mobile Sector. UK pay-TV operator Sky is set to add a range of mobile voice and data services to its customer offering for the first time following agreement of a new partnership with Telefónica UK which will see it become a Mobile Virtual Network Operator (MVNO). [read more]

6. Internet

BBC: BT Faces Tough New Broadband Tests. English regulatory Ofcom has recently announced that BT will be subject to new broadband tests. The aim of these tests is to ensure that BT offers fair wholesale prices to competitors who wish to access its network. In order to satisfy the criteria, there must be a sufficient gap between BT's wholesale price offered to other competitors and BT's own retail price (offered to its customers). [read more]

Total Telecoms: EE, Vodafone, Virgin Back Net Neutrality. This week EE, Vodafone and Virgin showed support in favour of the Broadband Stakeholder Group, the UK government's leading advisory group on broadband. By committing to the voluntary code of conduct the Internet Service Providers will ensure that their internet access products will not block any legal content. [read more]

eCommerce Times: FreedomPop's $5 WiFi Plan Whittles Wireless Bills. FreedomPop is offering an unlimited service plan that opens access to many more WiFi hotspots than are normally available to the public, and provides seamless connectivity from one hotspot to the next, for just $5 a month. [read more]

Financial Times: Telecoms Operators Welcome European Proposals on Net Neutrality. [read more – subscription required]

Arstechnica: FCC: Blocking Wi-Fi in Hotels is Prohibited. On Tuesday, the Federal Communications Commission issued an "Enforcement Advisory" stating that blocking W-Fi in hotels is unequivocally "prohibited". [read more]

TheVerge: The FCC Has Changed the Definition of Broadband. As part of its 2015 Broadband Progress Report, the Federal Communications Commission has voted to change the definition of broadband by raising the minimum download speeds needed from 4Mbps to 25Mbps, and the minimum upload speed from 1Mbps to 3Mbps, which effectively triples the number of US households without broadband access. [read more]

7. Television

Ericsson: Cord Cutters Challenge Content Companies. The numbers of TV cord cutters – or people not subscribing to a pay TV service – has grown to a point where content providers are aiming to reach them in new ways. It's clear that when more than 14 percent of US households do not subscribe to a pay TV service, we have reached an inflection point where we can expect accelerated market momentum for new ways to access traditional TV content. [read more]

8. eCOMMERCE

Cnet Tim Cook: 2015 Will be the Year of Apple Pay. Apple Pay has become the most popular payment option of its kind, Apple CEO Tim Cook said during the company's earnings call Tuesday. [read more]