

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

ERGP 1st Steering Group Meeting 2024

At the end of January, the ERGP held the first Steering Group meeting, during which the co-chairs of the various Working Groups and the Troika discussed the deliverables of 2024. The focus of the meeting was to review the expectations of this year and what is the work required by the various WGs and, at the same time, discuss possible stumbling blocks that are envisaged through the year.

Meeting of the DSC Heads

On 30th January 2024, the DSC Heads met, with the MCA in attendance as the Maltese prospective DSC. The agenda included updates on several DSA articles, such as: Out-of-Court Dispute Settlement Bodies (Article 21), Trusted Flaggors (Article 22), Data Access (Article 40), Right to Lodge a Complaint (Article 53), Definitions (Article 3), Market Monitoring (Article 24), and Systemic Risks (Articles 33-43). The meeting also focused on coordination with EBDS and COM, updates on DSC designation, and communication strategies. It concluded with a discussion on the future of the DSC head forum, resulting in a consensus that the forum will engage only when common objectives are not met through the DSA Board.

5th Meeting of the IT Subgroup of the DSA Expert Group

The 5th meeting of the Digital Services Expert ICT Subgroup was conducted online on the 30th January 2024, with participation from the MCA as the prospective Maltese DSC. The meeting focused on feedback across various work strands, including updates on the beta test system, ongoing developments in roles and responsibilities, onboarding of online platforms, messaging, support, and training. Additionally, feedback from Member States on preparations for the full implementation of the DSA was discussed. COM invited DSCs to formally appoint and communicate administrators for the IT system (Agora).

4th Meeting of the Informal Network

The MCA participated in the 4th Meeting of the Informal Network for the DSA, hosted by the EC's Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content, and Technology on 23rd January 2024. The meeting discussed the out-of-court dispute settlement (Article 21), trusted flaggers (Article 22), data access and scrutiny (Article 40), and transparency reporting obligations for online platforms (Article 24). The meeting also included discussions on the right to lodge a complaint (Article 53) and the preparatory outlook for the first meeting of the Board on 19th February 2024.

1st Meeting of the Task Force on Age Verification

The MCA participated in the 1st meeting of the Task Force on Age Verification, hosted online by the EC on 23rd January 2024. The meeting began with a high-level opening, followed by a presentation on the mapping of existing age assurance requirements and typologies, delivered by CNECT and Leiden University. The session continued with various Member States presenting their national approaches to age verification. The latter part of the meeting involved a discussion of tasks related to age verification processes. The meeting concluded with an overview of conclusions and next steps. Throughout the meeting, the EC implied the need for a harmonised technological solution for age verification to be adopted across the EU.

RSPG ‘Good offices’ Sub Group Meeting

The MCA co-chaired the meeting of the RSPG “Good offices” Sub Group to assist in bilateral negotiations between Member States, held online on the 11th January 2024. The meeting continued discussing cross-border frequency coordination, issues affecting the provision of terrestrial broadcasting and wireless broadband electronic communications services in Europe.

PUBLICATIONS

International News Week 36 2023

Published On: Jan 29th 2024 [News](#)

Key Market Indicators for Electronic Communications and Post - Q1 2019 to Q3 2023

Published On: Jan 26th 2024 [Data Report Sheet](#)

Review of QoS to be achieved by MaltaPost for the Universal Postal Service

Published On: Jan 26th 2024 [Decision](#)

Bundles Customer Perceptions Survey Results

Published On: Jan 22nd 2024 [Bundles](#)

Monthly Newsletter - December 2023

Published On: Jan 17th 2024 [News](#)

International News Week 34/35 2023

Published On: Jan 12th 2024 [News](#)

International News Week 34/35 2023

Published On: Jan 3rd 2024 [News](#)

MEDIA ACTIVITY

Television:

Date: 17.01.2024

Channel: FLiving

Programme: FLiving

Topic: Price Indexation Clauses

Participant: Mark Stivala

Date: 16.01.2024

Channel: One TV

Programme: One Breakfast

Topic: Price Indexation Clauses

Participant: Mark Stivala

LEGAL UPDATES

Legislation:

Following the publication of Bill No. 81 entitled 'Communications Laws (Amendment) Act, 2024'. The Bill was approved at committee stage on the 23rd January 2024 and is currently awaiting a final reading before being approved as law.

Litigation:

Sitting held on 9th January 2024:

Continuation for Court of Appeal (Superior Civil competence) in the case Vodafone (Malta) Ltd vs I-Awtorita ta' Malta dwar il-Komunikazzjoni et – whereby Vodafone (now EPIC) together with GO plc are contesting legal interpretation payments levied in 2006 and following years. The sitting held on the 9th January 2024 was in relation to the validity of an appeal by the MCA following a preliminary decision by the court of first instance whereby the MCA contested that court's jurisdiction. EPIC and GO opposed MCA's request to have this plea first decided. Court of Appeal decided to accede to MCA's request and a sitting has now been scheduled to debate MCA's appeal in this regard. Case stands adjourned for the 6th February 2024.

COLLABORATION

'Connecting Communities: Navigating the Communications Landscape in Collaboration with MCA'



On the 24th January 2024, the Malta Communications Authority (MCA), in collaboration with the Local Councils' Association Malta (LCA), organized a seminar for Regional Presidents, Mayors, Councilors, as well as employees of the Local Government Division. The seminar covered information related to telecommunications, and questions on this subject were addressed. The seminar carried the title: 'Connecting Communities: Navigating the Communications Landscape in Collaboration with MCA'.

