INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Plenary of the European Regulators Group for the Postal Services

The MCA participated in the European Regulators Group for Postal Services, which held the first biannual meeting of the heads of national regulatory authorities in the Azores, Portugal between the 27th and 29th June 2019. The status of the work being carried out by the expert working groups was discussed. The meeting adopted the ERGP Opinion on the review of the regulatory framework for postal services, advocating the development of a future regulatory framework for the postal sector from a wider perspective whilst formulating a number of recommendations to the European Commission. The Plenary also agreed on the draft ERGP Medium-Term Strategy 2020-22 and the ERGP Work Programme for the year 2020. The documents are available on the ERGP website for public consultation before their final approval.

High Level Group Meeting on Internet Governance

An MCA official attended the scheduled High Level Internet Governance (HLIG) meeting which was held at The Hague, The Netherlands on the 21st June 2019. The meeting comprised a multi-stakeholder session in the morning and a closed session dedicated for Member States in the afternoon. In the morning session, the Commission provided a detailed update on the adoption of the .eu Regulation. It consisted of a presentation on EuroDIG 2019, which was also held in the Netherlands, and a presentation on the upcoming IGF 2019 in Berlin which is scheduled for the 25th to the 29th November 2019. In the afternoon session, more information on the .eu Regulation and its implementation was disseminated. Continued discussion on Internet Governance developments ensued further into the earlier meetings of the HLIG.

Insafe Training and Insafe Steering Committee Meeting – BeSmartOnline!5

A representative for the MCA participated in the Insafe Training Meeting and Steering Committee Meeting on the 13th and 14th June in Heraklion, Crete. This meeting was held to facilitate experience and good-practice sharing across the network and continue to enhance the collaborative learning community that has developed within Insafe. An Open Space Technology was used during the meeting as a method of encouraging interaction and debate between countries. Other intended outcomes were:

- To share the latest research around gaming and screen time.
- To discuss vulnerable groups online and provide opportunities to look in greater depth at LGBTIQ+ issues and groups susceptible to hate speech.
- To consider online challenges and how best to address these with different stakeholder groups.
- Plan for Safer Internet Day (SID) 2020.

As a Safer Internet Centre (SIC) coordinator, the MCA official was also attended the Steering Committee meeting, representing the Maltese SIC. This meeting provides an opportunity for members of the network of European Safer Internet Centres to discuss and shape network-wide actions and policies for creating a safer and better internet for children and young people.

2nd BEREC Plenary 2019 Meeting

MCA attended the 2nd BEREC Plenary meeting of 2019, which was held in Ghent, Belgium between the 12th and 14th June 2019. The meeting was hosted by BIPT, the Belgian national regulatory authority. The BEREC Board of Regulators discussed the new BEREC Guidelines as mandated by the European Electronic Communications Code including:

- Guidelines on the minimum criteria for a reference offer
- Guidelines for the notification template (pursuant to Art 12);
- And Guidelines on the common criteria for the assessment of the ability of undertakings to manage numbering resources.

Amongst other matters, the Board also approved a common position of infrastructure sharing and an opinion on the functioning of the roaming market as an input to the European Commission evaluation. A full list of public documents adopted at the 39th ordinary meetings is available on the BEREC website.

27th Meeting of the COCOM Working Group on the Implementation of the Framework for Pan-European Systems Providing Mobile Satellite Services (MSS)

An official from the MCA attended the 27th meeting of the COCOM Working Group on the Implementation of the Framework for Pan-European Systems Providing Mobile Satellite Services, which was held on the 13th June 2019 in Brussels, Belgium. The Working Group had an informal exchange of views with the 2 GHz MSS operators. In particular, the group assessed the progress being made in the commercialisation of the 2 GHz satellite services as well as the state-of-play of the associated authorisation regimes.

49th Radio Spectrum Policy Group (RSPG) Meeting

The MCA was represented for the 49th Radio Spectrum Policy Group (RSPG) meeting which was held on the 12th June 2019 in Brussels, Belgium. The meeting considered the progress being made by the various RSPG working groups and in doing so it has provided guidance where necessary.

RSPG Working Group on 5G

A representative for the MCA attended the Radio Spectrum Policy Group (RSPG) Working Group on 5G meeting on the 11th June 2019 in Brussels, Belgium. During the first part of the meeting the members discussed some policy-related aspects for regulating the 5G pioneer 26GHz band under a general authorisation regime. During the second part of the meeting, the consultants of the European Commission provided an overview of the studies being undertaken in relation to small-area wireless access points. This study will contribute towards the adoption of implementing acts, specifying the physical and technical characteristics for such access points as required by article 57 of the Directive establishing the European Electronic Communications Code.

94th Electronic Communications Committee's (ECC) Working Group on Frequency Management Meeting

The Electronic Communications Committee's Working Group on Frequency Management (ECC WG FM) is responsible for developing strategies, plans and implementation advice for radio spectrum management within CEPT (European Conference for Postal and Telecommunication Administrations). The last meeting was held in Tallinn, Estonia between the 3rd and 7th June 2019. The meeting discussed aspects related to radio frequency monitoring, short range devices, mobile, satellite and maritime services. Several ECC deliverables pertaining to these services were also revised. The participation of the MCA allowed Malta to be involved in the process leading to the adoption of European spectrum management and licensing deliverables. This will feed in to the review process of legal instruments pertaining to spectrum management, in particular the national frequency plan.

7th Communications Committee Plenary Meeting (COCOM)

On the 4th June 2019, an MCA official attended the Communications Committee (COCOM) as the Malta Representative in Brussels, Belgium.

The COCOM is a committee composed of representatives of EU Member States. Its main role is to provide an opinion on the draft measures that the Commission intends to adopt. The COCOM deals with current issues which form the Digital Single Market such as:

- Commission Implementing Regulation on Roaming
- The call for expressions of interest for the selection of the ".eu Top Level Domain Registry"
- The implementation of the single European emergency number 112

The COCOM was established in 2002 under the Framework Directive. Members of the Committee usually meet five times a year in Brussels. Observers from candidate and EEA countries participate in the meetings. Moreover, experts from European telecommunications associations may be invited in the meeting for specific agenda points.

European Commission Public Stakeholder Workshop on the Postal Sector

An MCA representative participated in a 1-day workshop hosted by the European Commission on the 4th June 2019 in Brussels, Belgium. The workshop started with an introduction by the Commission which focused on the Implementation of the Regulation on cross-border parcel delivery services in 2019 and the overall timeline leading to a legal proposal for a new Postal Services Directive. This was followed by a presentation by WiK-Consult on the interim findings on a study on user needs in the postal sector. Two panel discussions discussed "Which postal services do tomorrow's users need?" and "Assessment of the Postal Services Directive".

PUBLICATIONS

MCA Overview 2018

Published On: Jun 28th 2019 MCA Overviews

Domestic Single-Piece and Bulk Mail Services

Published On: Jun 27th 2019 News

2019 MCA Perceptions Survey - Postal Services - Large Bulk Mailers

Published On: Jun 27th 2019 Large Bulk Mailers

2019: MCA Perceptions Survey - Postal Services - Large Bulk Mailers

Published On: Jun 26th 2019 News

Notice: Assignment of Radio Spectrum for Fixed Radio Links

Published On: Jun 24th 2019 News

BEREC Launches Public Consultations – Calls for Input

Published On: Jun 21st 2019 News

Monthly Newsletter - May 2019

Published On: Jun 17th 2019 News

Invitation to the BEREC Public Debriefing of the 39th BEREC Board of Regulators Ordinary Meetings

Published On: Jun 13th 2019 News

Pre-notification to Deliver Qualified Preservation Services for Qualified Electronic Signatures and Qualified Electronic Seals

Published On: Jun 12th 2019 News

Proposed Decision on the Source of Funding for the Net Cost incurred in providing Universal Service Obligations during 2015

Published On: Jun 6th 2019 Consultation

MEDIA ACTIVITY

Television:

Date: 27.06.2019

Channel: TVM

Programme: Waranofsinhar

Topic: Fault Repair Timeframes

Participant: Yanika Buġeja

Date: 12.06.2019

Channel: TVM

Programme: Niskata

Topic: Fault Repair Timeframes

Participant: Yanika Buġeja

Date: 06.06.2019

Channel: TVM

Programme: Waranofsinhar

Topic: Roaming

Participant: Yanika Buġeja

Date: 05.06.2019

Channel: ONE

Programme: Espresso

Topic: Intra-EU Communications

Participant: Yanika Buġeja

LEGAL UPDATES

Litigation:

●25th June 2019: Sitting before ART in the appeal by Aspider Solutions Malta Ltd. Aspider are contesting a regulatory decision of the MCA imposing an administrative fine for non-compliance with number porting requirements. Aspider commenced with their evidence in this case. Appeal has been adjourned to the 11th November 2019 for the continuation of evidence by Aspider.

●25th June 2019: Vodafone vs MCA before ART – contesting MCA's decision entitled 'Virtual Unbundled Access to Fibre-To-The-Home: implementing the VULA remedy' – adjourned to the 11th November 2019 for the presentation of the final submissions by VFM.

●25th June 2019: Vodafone vs MCA before ART – contesting an MCA decision following a dispute filed by Vodafone. MCA submitted its written submissions in response to those previously submitted by Vodafone. Case has been adjourned to the 11th November 2019 for Tribunal's decision.

EVENTS

The Launch of Women4IT

In all EU Member States, women are underrepresented in the labour market. In 2017, the gender employment gap amounted to 11.6 percentage points across the EU, with a 76.9% employment rate for men and 65.3% for women. To reach the Europe 2020 target of a 75% employment rate for both women and men, particular attention needs to be devoted to the labour market participation of women.

Today, 90% of the jobs require digital skills, and there are not enough skilled people to occupy these jobs. More men than women have good ICT skills and are employed in digital jobs. That is why Women4IT will investigate the ICT skills of 1,000 women and train 700 of them based on the customised needs of employers and the opportunities provided by them to test new digital jobs. The project, funded by Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, through the EEA and Norway Grants Fund for Youth Employment, benefits from a €2.7 million grant, from which Malta benefitted €346,672, and runs from September 2018 until August 2021.

Women4IT's aim is to develop digital competences and thereby, the employability of young women (15-29 years of age) at risk of exclusion from the labour market, as well as to provide innovative solutions to increase the number of young women in ICT careers and women participating in the digital economy. The project will mainly target unemployed young women, women without targeted education, women in after maternity leave and women coming from low income/disadvantaged families.

The initiative will pursue its goals through awareness raising, skills assessment, innovative partnerships with employers, through the development of a new online employability profiling tool, and through training and guidance towards employment in digital jobs.

In phase 1 of the project, a study was conducted among employers and stakeholders, to analyse skills shortages/mismatches as well as to identify digital job profiles that will be in demand by employers in the near future, as well as their contribution to the employability of young women. Internet of Things, Mobile Services and Cloud Technologies resulted in the most used technologies utilised by the participating organisations. Moreover, the study findings show

that in the coming five years Solution Designer, Developer and Digital Media Specialist will be job profiles mostly in demand.

Photo: DOI - Pierre Sammut

Opening the event, the Hon. Silvio Schembri, Parliamentary Secretary for Financial Services, Digital Economy and Innovation remarked that, "As a country we have moved a lot within the digital space becoming now a main point of reference, yet we are still lagging behind in women participation. If addressed now, the digital sector could be the first walk where we could see women on par with men".

The Hon. Aaron Farrugia, Parliamentary Secretary for EU Funds and Social Dialogue, said that this project is a significant one in which Malta is partnering with a number of other countries, including Norway, which is the largest donor country within the EEA and Norway Financial Mechanisms. He said that the amount of Norwegian funds have increased from €3 million to €8 million in this programming period, and are focusing on reducing socio-economic disparities in Malta. "The programme will help us to give digital skills to young women as part of our holistic plan to decrease the number of school leavers and continue with the programme of re-training, re-skilling and up-skilling of the Maltese workforce", he said.

Photo: DOI - Pierre Sammut

Women working in the digital sector contributed to a panel discussion with the theme: 'Increasing the number of women in digital careers', which focused on topics such as : where is Malta lagging in attracting females to take up STEM subjects; what can be done by industry to proactively address the gap; and work-life balance. The discussion was moderated by Dr Maria Brown.

Photo: DOI - Pierre Sammut

In a message Her Excellency, President Emeritus, Marie Louise Coleiro Preca, stressed that myths such as when girls are perceived as not having an aptitude for technical subjects, must be countered, and girls must be mentored to see themselves as able to further their education in ICT-related subjects so as to succeed and to pursue a career in ICT. "Real challenges such as work-life balance; segregation of ICT jobs with males being better-paid; an existing male-dominated environment; the lack of role models and a real gender pay gap all need to be tackled head on in order to address disparity".

Closing the event, Ms Dana Farrugia, CEO Tech.MT stressed that although the success and fast evolution of our digital economy is satisfactory, the risk of exclusion is real, and it must be ensured that no one remains on the outside looking in on technological evolution. "It is encouraging to see the Government fully committed to reducing the digital divide and organisations coming together today to support this collaborative framework. Thanks to this commitment we can ensure that women and young girls are truly allowed to decide about their future and regain their destiny in their own hands", she concluded.

Women4IT is a multi-stakeholder partnership funded by the EEA Grants and the Norway Grants Fund for Youth Employment. The project is developed by 9 partners from across Europe and various sectors. It will be implemented in 7

countries: Malta, Greece, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and Spain, and is supported by two expert partners: the European Centre for Women and Technology – Norway, and DIGITAL EUROPE – Belgium.

Locally developed eBusiness Solutions recognised at the 8th Edition of the eBusiness Awards

The 8th edition of the MCA's eBusiness Awards was held on the 19th June 2019, at the Mediterranean Conference Centre in Valletta. These awards have consistently showcased some of the best solutions that have been developed by locally-based ICT organisations which, amongst other attributes combine creativity, information technology, as well as business or social innovation. In doing so, such an event has provided a platform for increased visibility to participants and an excellent means to credit the efforts and unique talents demonstrated by all those involved in the roll-out of such innovative business initiatives.

In his address, the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary Silvio Schembri highlighted the significance of these awards and how they evolved to reward and encourage the growth of eBusiness as one of the key drivers of the Maltese economy. "Since the first edition of these awards the digital world has changed, and it did so in many ways. The progress in technology made huge leaps forward and we, as a nation, did not hesitate to keep in sync with its swift pace. Thanks to the private investment and business-friendly climate, Malta is today singled out as the only European member state with a

nation-wide coverage of ultra-fast fixed internet service – hence, we are truly a gigabit society in the making.

Indeed after 8 successful editions characterised by a consistent, year after year improvement, the eBusiness Awards will embrace yet another very important evolution. During the award giving ceremony it was announced that, following recent developments, as from the next edition, these awards will fall under the responsibility of the newly established Tech.mt.

"Rewarding talent in Technology & Innovation leaves a ripple effect of feel good factor and business retention on our island. We instil confidence when acknowledging innovative ideas in the use of web-based technologies. This is confirmed from what we have seen from past winners, as they went ahead to achieve considerable growth. The majority of companies who were recognised by the eBusiness Awards initiative have remained in Malta and still choose Malta as their hub for technology and business growth. For us at Tech.mt, There is no better certificate of trust than this", said Dana Farrugia, CEO Tech.mt.

This year, 21 solutions, from seven different categories, made it to the final. The following is a highlight of the winners on the night:

- The Best App category was won by Savvisave of Mapfre MSV Life plc. This app is a flexible, goal oriented, digital savings product that lets you save towards your personal goal.
- TinkTank Ltd snapped up the award for the Best eCommerce site (B2C) with their Tinkshop website developed by NIU Ltd. Thetinkshop.com is effectually setting new standards in the gift giving industry in

Malta by offering its users the ability to design the products themselves, online, from the comfort of their home whilst drastically reducing order fulfilment lead times.

- The Best eGovernment initiative went to MCST for their portal Plumtri developed by Seasus. Plumtri.org facilitates the interaction as well as the showcasing and sharing of information amongst individuals and organisations engaged in research and innovation.

- The Office of the Prime Minister clinched the award for Best Use of Technology in Business Transformation, with their product BiedjaCam developed by the Ministry for the Environment, Sustainable Development and Climate Change. BiedjaCam is a collaboration platform, between the Agriculture and Rural Payments Agency and land farmers, to better manage controls of subsidies related to the Common Agricultural Policy.

- Best ICT Academic Project with an eBusiness Theme was won by Mr Karl Bezzina, a young student from the Faculty of ICT at the University of Malta with his dissertation: Flexible Job Shop Scheduling of a Production Line with Overlapping in Operations.

- MITA walked away with the newly introduced category – Excellence, Innovation and Leadership in Information Security – with their Hybrid Cloud for Government developed by ICT Solutions. The hybrid cloud is truly at the cutting edge of secure by design implementations.

- And finally, The Best Social Media Campaign (50% People's Choice) went to the Zabbar Local Council for their Umbrella Installation Campaign by Y Ltd. The umbrellas were an instant hit on social media. Within a week the installation was featured in all news bulletins, news portals and newspapers, and also in a variety of international photographic reports ranging from Singapore to Paris and Saudi Arabia. This was the widest exposure ever given to the city of Zabbar.

The MCA congratulates all winners, finalists and participants.