MCA
MALTA COMMUNICATIONS AUTHORITY

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
June 2023

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

BEREC Digital Markets Working Group

A representative from the MCA participated in a meeting held on Friday, 30th June 2023, focusing on a survey designed to gather additional insights from stakeholders dealing with digital markets, particularly with respect to CAPs. The preliminary questionnaire covers a range of pertinent topics, including the investment of CAPs in ECS/ECN, the role of CDNs, the competitive landscape in cloud services involving major CAPs and ECS/ECN providers, the provision and categorization of VPN services, and the evolving competition in submarine cable connectivity. The upcoming meeting, scheduled for July 11th, will focus on discussing an improved and more precise edition of the questionnaire.

Digital Services Act Stakeholder Event: Shaping the Future of Digital Services

Bernard Agius, on behalf of the MCA, participated in the "Digital Services Act Stakeholder Event" organized by the European Commission in Brussels, Belgium, on June 27th, 2023. The event aimed to shape the future of digital services through engagement with platform representatives, policymakers, and industry experts. It featured an opening plenary panel on social media's impact on young people's mental health, followed by 14 engaging workshops covering topics such as gender-based violence, online hate, privacy, and freedom of expression. The closing plenary addressed the systemic political risks posed by social media platforms to democratic values. The event fostered a vibrant, egalitarian, and inclusive online democracy while prioritizing the protection of fundamental rights.

26th Meeting of the ECC Working Group Numbering and Networks (NaN)

Two representatives from the MCA participated in the Working Group NaN Plenary meeting held in Budapest, Hungary, between the 20th and 22nd June, 2023 (one physically, one remotely). During this meeting, participants were provided with updates on the work related to current and future numbering issues which was carried out by the three project teams reporting to this working group during the preceding seven months. An overview of work activities taking place within BEREC, ITU-SG2, ETSI and EENA in areas which are relevant to this working group was also provided. The meeting participants also discussed various themes of relevance to WG NaN, in particular those related to ongoing and future work items which will be the focus of the WG NaN project teams during the coming months, including a focus session on CLI spoofing. The meeting also endorsed for public consultation a new ECC Recommendation, a revision to an ECC Recommendation, one draft ECC Report, and draft amendments to two ECC Decisions. Revisions to two ECC Recommendations were adopted for publication.

BEREC Market and Economic Analysis Working Group concerning the Competition Dynamics of Tower and Access Infrastructure Companies

The BEREC Market and Economic Analysis Working Group convened and is currently investigating the competition dynamics of tower and access infrastructure companies in the ECS /
ECN space, seeking also input from various experts, including from NRAs, to gain insights into the establishment of infrastructure companies, their organizational structure, access offerings, and their impact on competition and investment in high-capacity fixed and mobile networks. Additionally, BEREC is looking at the authorization aspects of these companies as electronic communications service (ECS) providers. In this regard, WIK organized a virtual workshop on behalf of BEREC on June 20th, focusing on the competition dynamics of tower and fiber access infrastructure companies. The workshop will delve into the topic of "Competition dynamics of tower and fiber access infrastructure companies.

EU Postal Directive Committee (PDC)

On the 15th June 2023, a member of the MCA participated in the first Postal Directive Committee (PDC) meeting for 2023. Two Member States presented upcoming changes to their postal laws with the main objective of safeguarding the sustainability of the universal postal service. The European Commission provided an update on the prospective study on the future of the postal sector. Other items discussed included the UPU Extraordinary Congress to be held in October, the ERGP work programme 2023, customs related matters and postal standardisation.

P2B Informal Network Group Meeting

The MCA participated in the P2B informal network group which met remotely on 14th June to further discuss the implementation of the P2B Regulation in terms of scoping and administration. Members mentioned individual initiatives currently undertaken at national level in terms of guidelines published and

awareness raising efforts, as well as activities carried out jointly with other member states. The meeting concluded with an overview by the Commission of the findings resulting from the P2B implementation study carried out. The report is expected to be published soon in-conjunction with the SME Relief Package.

BEREC Report on the Entry of Large Content and Application Providers into the Markets for Electronic Communications Networks and Services

The meeting was convened on the 15th June, regarding the draft version of the 'BEREC Report on the participation of major content and application providers in the markets for electronic communications networks and services.' This report investigates the investments made by large content and application providers in telecommunications infrastructures and services. The discussion focused on the main aspects of the draft report, namely the approaches employed by these providers and their position within the value chain, demonstrating how it has changed or is changing over time. Additionally, experts discussed the potential effects on the dynamics of electronic communications services markets from a competition standpoint. No anticipated problems for Malta's position, except some follow-up is necessary for the issue of content delivery networks (CDNs) and their status as authorized electronic communications service (ECS) providers in different member states, and the associated implications for competition in such cases.

61st Meeting of the Radio Spectrum Policy Group

(RSPG)

The MCA participated in the meeting under reference, held on the 14th June. The meeting considered the progress of the work done by the various RSPG sub-groups, and in doing so it agreed to publish, for public consultation, a draft Opinion on the development of 6G and possible implications for spectrum needs and guidance on the rollout of future wireless broadband networks. At the meeting the MCA has also presented the progress of the work done by the RSPG sub-group on "Good Offices".

WADEX Webinar – 21st June 2023

"EASIER" Project

First on the Agenda was an overview of the "Easier" Project. Dr Giacomo Inches explained how "Easier" aims at developing a framework that can recognize and translate sign language thus improving significantly the quality of life of deaf users. This is a project of Horizon 2020 and is still in research and experimental stage. It is based on a unique combination of technological sign language resources and sign language linguistics expertise. More specifically, the project is defined by three main pillars:

1.   Exploitation of a robust data-driven sign language recognition engine.

2.   Utilization of a signing avatar engine that produces easy-to-understand signing and integrates information on affective expressions and coherent prosody.

3.   Incorporation of machine translation technology capable of dealing with a wide range of languages and communication scenarios (far beyond the restricted weather report and post office

use cases demonstrated to date).

Dr Inches described some of the challenges encountered; there is no one universal sign language, rather, sign languages have the same linguistic properties as spoken languages. Just as spoken languages, they evolve and vary between countries and regions. Moreover, sign language isn't only about gestures but also about facial expressions and body movements, these are being closely studied and the "Easier" sign language avatar translator will be able to detect and replicate not only words but also different tones, expressions and emotions. The framework being developed in fact, will also rely on the intervention of end users who will be able to correct the translations thus improving the intelligence and the quality of the translation system.

Accessibility statements and feedback mechanism in the European Commission

Ms Emilia Andrejova - Accessibility coordinator, European Commission explained how all Europa.eu domain websites (around 770 sites) need to follow specific rules and guidelines, amongst which are the EU accessibility standards and the WCAG 2.1 guidelines. The EU Commission has an action plan to encourage harmonisation across these sites, including monitoring, sharing of best practices and awareness raising.

Ms Andrejova stated that the accessibility statement and the feedback mechanism are of utmost importance to the commission since through the accessibility statement, the site owner can prove and declare his commitment towards website accessibility. Site owners are provided with templates and guidelines that help them draft such statements as well as a feedback mechanism which needs to be in place before the accessibility statement can be published. Finally, the validity of an Accessibility Statement depends also on its

upkeep, hence, it should be reviewed and updated at least on a yearly basis.

The 105th Working Group on Frequency Management (WGFM#105)

The Electronic Communications Committee's Working Group on Frequency Management (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 a hybrid environment between the 12th and 16th June, 2023. The meeting discussed aspects related to several radiocommunication services and reviewed several ECC decisions, recommendations, and reports. The participation of the MCA allowed Malta to be involved in the process leading to the adoption of European spectrum management and licensing deliverables, which will eventually feed into the review process of local legislation pertaining to spectrum management.

55th BEREC Board of Regulators (BoR) / Management Committee (MC) Plenary Meetings

MCA participated in the BoR meetings held on the 8th & 9th June, 2023 in Montenegro. The meetings were hosted by EKIP, the national regulatory authority of Montenegro. The BoR discussed and approved a number of documents including: BEREC's contribution to the European Commission's (EC) exploratory consultation; BEREC Opinion on the EC's Gigabit Recommendation; BEREC's analysis of EC's legislative proposal on the Gigabit Infrastructure Act; a Draft BEREC Report on practices and challenges of the phasing out of 2G and 3G; BEREC

Report on interoperability for number-independent interpersonal communication services (NI-ICS); BEREC report on the monitoring of the Joint Statement between EU-UA operators. The BoR also approved Work Arrangements with the Balkan countries to replace on the older agreements that had been drafted by the European Commission, and that were later annulled by an ECJ ruling. A full list of BEREC's public documents adopted at the 55th ordinary meeting is available on the BEREC website: Go To Link

ITU Multilateral Meeting on Broadcasting Related Interference

The MCA participated in a multilateral meeting organised by the Radiocommunication Bureau of the International Telecommunication Union. This is an annual meeting which aims to assess developments on the reported cases of harmful interference caused by Italian broadcasting stations to neighbouring countries.

Round Table on the Digital Services Act

Joseph Seychell and Bernard Agius, representing the Malta Communications Authority (MCA), participated in the "Round Table on the Digital Services Act" meeting organized by the European Commission. The meeting aimed to discuss the preparations for implementing the Digital Services Act (DSA) across Member States. Key topics included the designation and independence of Digital Services Coordinators (DSCs), allocation of human resources and expertise, and the progress of secondary legislation. Member States provided updates on their plans, timelines, and the competent authorities involved in DSC roles. The meeting stressed the importance of timely DSC designation and readiness for the DSA's implementation by February 2024, as well as

emphasized cooperation, capacity building, and transparency reporting as essential priorities.

CEPT Workshop on 6G Mobile Communications

The MCA attended a workshop under reference, which explored various areas such as the current status of work on 6G, the key drivers, technology and applications, the possible usage scenarios cases and the resulting spectrum requirements.

PUBLICATIONS

MCA International News Week 13/14 2023

Published On: Jun 22nd 2023 News

Monthly Newsletter - May 2023

Published On: Jun 14th 2023 News

MEDIA ACTIVITY

Television:

Date: 26.06.2023

Channel: TVM

Programme: Tvam

Topic: Number Portability

Participant: Yanika Bugeja / Alistair Farrugia

Radio:

Date: 13.06.2023

Channel: Radju Malta

Programme: Għal Kulħadd

Topic: Roaming

Participant: Yanika Bugeja

LEGAL UPDATES

Laws:

Issue on the 19th June 2023 in tandem with MEFL of a public consultation entitled *The Digital Services Act (Designation and Enforcement) Order, 2023.*