

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

### **BEREC Market Economic Analysis Expert Working Group Meeting**

On the 29<sup>th</sup> of November, a representative for the MCA attended a meeting organised by the BEREC MEA EWG concerning the draft Report on the 'Regulatory Treatment for Fixed and Mobile Backhaul'. This meeting follows the closure of consultation on this report.

Consultation feedback mainly focused on the role of the Broadband Cost Reduction Directive (BCRD) in the context of backhaul, the possibility to define a separate market for backhaul, the impact of regulating backhauls on investment, and the role of dark fibre for backhaul.

### **56<sup>th</sup> RSPG Plenary Meeting**

An MCA official participated in the 56<sup>th</sup> RSPG Plenary meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2021. In particular, the meeting adopted an RSPG Opinion on the role of radio spectrum policy to help combat climate change. It also approved the publication of its Work Programme for 2022-2023, for public consultation ([link](#)). The new RSPG Chair and Vice-Chair for the coming 2 years have been elected.

### **23<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the ECC Working Group NaN**

Representatives from the MCA participated in the virtual Working Group NaN Plenary meeting which was held between the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> November 2021. During this meeting, participants were provided with updates on the work related to current and future numbering issues which was carried out by the project teams reporting to this working group during the preceding six months. An overview of work activities taking place within ITU-T Study Group 2 and ETSI in areas which are relevant to this working group was also provided. In 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.

### **4<sup>th</sup> BEREC/IRG Contact Network 2021**

MCA participated in the 4<sup>th</sup> BEREC/IRG Contact Network (CN) 2021 Meeting held on the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> November 2021. The objective of the Meeting was to prepare for the 49<sup>th</sup> BoR Plenary. During the CN, the respective Expert Working Groups and BEREC Office presented to the CN members a number of documents (including Guidelines, Reports and Opinions) as well as Oral updates on ongoing/completed BEREC deliverables.

### **4<sup>th</sup> Conference Preparatory Group Meeting for WRC-23 CPG23-4**

An official from the MCA participated in the 4<sup>th</sup> Conference Preparatory Group (CPG) meeting for the World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC) 2023. The meeting considered progress being made by its project teams in the development of CEPT positions for each of the agenda items for WRC-23.

### **49<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the ECC Working Group NaN1**

Representatives from the MCA participated in a web meeting of a project team within WG NaN which was held between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> November 2021.

The project team held discussions on multiple aspects related to future numbering issues, including ongoing drafting of Reports and reviewing of ECC Recommendations. During the meeting, a review of three ECC Recommendations was undertaken, and work was completed on a draft ECC Report intended to be published for public consultation.

### **RSPG Good Offices Meeting**

An MCA official attended the Radio Spectrum Policy Group (RSPG) meeting on the 5<sup>th</sup> November 2021. The meeting considered developments in the application of EECC Article 28(3) in relation to cross-border interference problems in the UHF band, pursuant to RSPG Opinion 21-029. In addition, the meeting continued discussing the interference situation caused by Italy to its neighbouring countries in the FM and VHF band III.

## Open Internet Expert Working Group Meetings

The MCA attended the meeting of the Open Internet Expert Working group on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2021 (Online). The main topic of discussion remains the latest rulings by the ECJ concerning zero-rated offers. BEREC is preparing its legal position upon which the subsequent updates to the BEREC guidelines on Open Internet regulation will be based.

## 57<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Electronic Communications Committee

A representative from the MCA attended 57<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Electronic Communications Committee (ECC) between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> November 2021. The meeting approved various ECC Decisions aimed at harmonising the use of radio spectrum within CEPT. It also approved CEPT Reports and considered the work being undertaken in relation to mandates granted by the European Commission.

### PUBLICATIONS

#### MCA International News Week 25

Published On: Nov 30<sup>th</sup> 2021 *News*

#### Decision on the Source of Funding for the Net Cost incurred in providing Universal Service Obligations during 2017

Published On: Nov 22<sup>nd</sup> 2021 *Decision*

#### MCA International News Week 24

Published On: Nov 16<sup>th</sup> 2021 *News*

#### Monthly Newsletter - October 2021

Published On: Nov 15<sup>th</sup> 2021 *News*

#### Communications Market Review: July 2020 to June 2021

Published On: Nov 8<sup>th</sup> 2021 *Market Review*

#### MCA International News Week 23

Published On: Nov 8<sup>th</sup> 2021 *News*

#### Guidelines on Platform to Business Regulation

Published On: Nov 3<sup>rd</sup> 2021 *News*

#### Source of Funding for the Net Cost incurred in providing Universal Service Obligations during 2017

Published On: Nov 2<sup>nd</sup> 2021 *Consultation*

### EVENTS

#### The Malta Communications Authority Celebrates its 20 Year Anniversary with Hybrid Conference Featuring Influential International and Local Industry Experts

The Malta Communications Authority (MCA) commemorated its 20-year anniversary as the national regulator of the communications sector with an international conference on the 25<sup>th</sup> of November. The conference, held at the Hilton Malta Hotel, was also live-streamed and included sign-language interpretation to ensure greater accessibility for everyone.

The Conference “**Unlocking Digital Value for Society**” was aimed at sharing insights on the role of future regulation for the communications industry. It featured live and remote participation of over 20 influential speakers from European institutions and other national communications regulators, global digital corporations, local institutions and businesses, as well as academia.



The morning session discussed the opportunities and challenges ahead in the digital age as relevant to MCA's regulatory remit, while the afternoon session honed in on local regulatory initiatives in the field of digital services and eCommerce in Malta, with a dedicated focus on the application of digital accessibility for all.

In a video message on the special occasion, Minister for the Economy and Industry, Hon. Silvio Schembri – who was attending to other ministerial matters abroad – expressed that, “Malta prides itself on a strong regulatory framework in the electronic communications sector – a framework which is inspired by the EU and international rules. A framework that fosters competition and drives private investment.”



The Minister acknowledged that, “Malta has always been at the forefront to support the introduction of the latest and most modern technologies, supporting innovation and a market environment that fosters increased choices for consumers. Malta's reputation as a front-runner in this field within the European Union was even noticed by the European Commission in its most recent *Digital Economy and Society*

Index (DESI) which stated that Malta has already fulfilled the 2025 Gigabit society objectives”.

Hon. Schembri also emphasised how the private investments in the local communications sector are a clear testament of the trust underbuilt by the regulatory work of the Authority in creating the right environment for competition to thrive. The Minister also went on to congratulate the MCA on the occasion of the Authority's 20-year anniversary, while thanking all the staff for their hard work and dedication.

Throughout the years the Authority's responsibilities expanded, moving from the regulation of electronic communication sector, postal sector, and e-Commerce, to new remits in relation to the management of radio spectrum and other spheres where digital regulation developed - such as enforcing EU rules in relation to trust services, geo-blocking, and web accessibility.



While expressing his own sentiments of gratitude for all MCA staff, Jesmond Bugeja – CEO of the MCA - expressed how, “20

years full of challenges transformed into opportunities have nurtured investment and placed Malta as one of the leaders in connectivity in Europe. A journey marked by so many developments and accomplishments for the sector, the country, and the MCA and which promises to become even more exciting with the advent of transformative technologies such as 5G that are poised to unlock a new world of connected opportunity. We have learned to change and continuously develop our expertise to support this process and ensure the effective enforcement of new rules”.

During the Conference, Mr. Bugeja, along with MaltaPost's CEO Mr. Joseph Gafà, also presented a custom set of postage stamps, issued by MaltaPost in commemoration of the MCA's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.



In his Keynote Address, Roberto Viola, Director-General of the European Commission's department for Communications Networks, Content and Technology (DG CONNECT), who joined the conference remotely, on behalf of the European Commission, expressed his appreciation and thanks for the MCA's work over the past 20 years, and commended Malta's significant progress over the years in the field of connectivity.



In engaging policy makers, regulators, research institutions and private stakeholders, the conference managed to address the evolving opportunities and challenges taking shape due to ongoing digitisation, against the backdrop of the extensive policy and regulatory responses.

The whole conference is now available online through the link below:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=45cflibf\\_vo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=45cflibf_vo)

