

Activities of the Office of Telecommunications and Post Regulation in Poland/URTiP aiming at the promotion of the low cost broadband Internet

The task of the promotion of low cost broadband Internet is very important i.a. in order to fully implement the principals of the Information Society. Especially, the adoption of the law on electronic signature which creates the legal basis for sending via Internet all sorts of administrative formularies necessary to the correct functioning of the economy requires a proper and fast data transmission.

In 2003 only 1.2% of Poland's population had broadband access to the Internet through all available platforms, out of which a third is represented by the subscribers of cable television. High prices of these services are an obstacle in their development. URTiP has conducted an analysis of telecommunications services availability with a special emphasis on data transmission services in economically underdeveloped areas. The analysis was conducted within the work group for telecommunications services availability which was formed by the President of URTiP with the communication of the Ministry of Infrastructure. The following conclusions have been drawn:

- 1) the necessity of **new investments** in order to improve the accessibility and availability of telecommunications services, including Internet,
- 2) necessity of more effective use of the **frequencies resources** in order to promote **wireless telecommunications systems**; using his powers in the field of frequencies management and acting in accordance with the principal of transparency the President of URTiP took several measures related to the reservation of frequencies for wireless communication systems. The use was made of new technologies applied in radio subscribers access systems which enables fast deployment of network infrastructure resulting in fast introduction of services. The deployment of WLL network is faster and cheaper than the deployment of wire subscribers access. Extension of the above mentioned services is possible thanks to new possibilities offered by the amendments to National Table of Frequency Allocation,
- 3) encouragement of development of Internet access systems via **power lines** (maintaining compatibility with the existing radio communications and broadcasting networks),
- 4) regular invitations (twice a year) to submit applications for wide coverage telecommunications authorisations in the area of network deployment based on radio

access. The assessment of the submitted applications should focus not only on technical viability with respect to frequency allocation but primarily on:

- a) guarantees of financing that enable network deployment covering vast area of the country with particular emphasis on economically underdeveloped areas,
 - b) offering technical solutions for integrated services – the telephony, as well as fast data transmission services,
 - c) application of modern technologies that proved successful all over the world and are commonly applied (economies of scale); this condition will ensure relatively low prices for equipment, terminals and the guarantee of long term maintenance,
 - d) the market power of an operator taking account of market **demonopolization** and openness to **healthy competition**. The initiative to provide frequencies for new radio access systems should take into consideration social needs,
- 5) regulatory actions by the President of URTiP in order to stimulate **demonopolization** and **liberalization** of telecommunications market,
- 6) extension of the provision of **Internet services by cable and satellite television** operators,
- 7) promotion of telecommunications activities in the **rural and underdeveloped areas**;
In 2000, in the framework of PHARE 2000, structural fund of European Union, a twinning program on universal service in telecommunications was carried out between URTiP and Spanish Ministry of Science and Technology in Madrid. The main objective of the twinning consisted in drawing up a strategy for implementation of universal service in the rural areas in Poland taking into account the new framework for electronic communications set by European Union. The pilot project focused mainly on the development of telecom infrastructure along with the services and application of Information Society on the territory of two Polish administration units (powiat) selected for their specificity, and for being representative of Poland; with partly rural and industrial territories, characterised by underdeveloped infrastructure. The pilot project provided not only for the application of multitechnological solutions as far as networks are concerned but also allowed the gradual development of infrastructure resulting in broadband access.