

*11 April 2016, 9:30*

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Colleagues,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you here in Warsaw at the conference dedicated to Broadband Services and Infrastructure Mapping.

In particular, I would like to welcome representatives of the co-organizers: the International Telecommunication Union, with Mr Brahima Sanou, the Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau and the European Commission, with Mr Guido Acchoni, Policy Officer from the Broadband Unit of DG Connect.

Thank you for choosing Poland for this very important conference.

Let me also welcome the representatives of European ministries and regulators – I am very pleased to see so many of you here today.

“A map tells you where you’ve been, where you are, and where you’re going — in a sense it’s three tenses in one.” Paraphrasing these words of film director Peter Greenaway, we can say that maps give us a glimpse into the future. In our case, infrastructure mapping enables us to target investments to foster the development of information society.

With each passing year Broadband Services are becoming a more and more important feature of the telecommunications market. Infrastructure Mapping is one of the tools to facilitate its development.

These two topics: Broadband Services and Infrastructure Mapping have played a very important role in the development of modern telecommunications market in Poland. That is why we – at the Office of Electronic Communications – have always given them a high priority in our work.

Our adventure with mapping started in 2010, when the regulator gained competences to collect information on existing and planned infrastructure from undertakings and other entities.

Over the years our competences in this area have been increasing, as well as the operators’ awareness. Thanks to that, each year the accuracy of the inventory improves.

We have been engaged in various initiatives connected with Broadband Mapping:

- in cooperation with ITU we have been working on Building Terrestrial Transmission Maps for Poland within ITU Global Interactive Transmission Map project;
- we have also engaged in the EC's initiatives such as building EU Broadband Monitoring Platform.

What we can observe is the growing number of European and international activities related to infrastructure mapping – it proves how important this topic becomes throughout the world.

Infrastructure Mapping is a tool that has been used in Poland for years.

It has proved to be a great tool to identify areas for future investment.

Up until now in Poland – with the use of EU funds - we have been mostly developing backbone networks. Under the previous financial perspective 2007-2013 we built 24 000 km of new fibre networks. Now we are starting a new stage, in which focus is on access network. In any case, in the last few years Poland has been one big construction site for telecommunications networks.

Of course, to some extent, this could not happen without the help of EU funds.

It is worth noting that our inventory has been used to determine the “bid areas” where investments with the use of EU funds will be implemented.

However, investments are not the only way to use information on infrastructure mapping.

Let me just mention a search engine for broadband infrastructure and services that we have launched last month. Its aim is to facilitate citizens' access to high-speed internet.

It is an easy way to check what kind of broadband services are available at a given place and which operators are providing them.

What is more, anybody who is interested in additional services or in higher-speed broadband services can fill out a dedicated request form. Information collected this way will be used to prepare maps showing users' needs as regards telecommunications services.

The search engine allows us to address not only expectations of telecommunications entrepreneurs, but also to focus on users' needs.

Moreover, I want to stress that our inventory is very useful for market analysis, because if we have data down to the building level, we are able to carry out targeted analysis and apply targeted market regulation.

However, it is not only important to build high-quality telecoms network, but also to maintain its net neutrality and keep it open for all the parties. This is why, on the margins of this conference, we will meet with our colleagues from Croatia, the Czech Republic, Romania, Slovenia and Serbia – Signatories of the Quality of Service and Spectrum Management Memorandum - to discuss these issues.

UKE has been active in this area: we have concluded a Quality of Service Memorandum with market players and last year we conducted mobile network drive tests and developed measurement tool to monitor broadband networks.

We are very glad to share our best practice in the area of Broadband Services and Infrastructure Mapping but we are even more keen to hear about your experience in this area.

It is most valuable to learn and benefit from others' practice and follow the successful projects.

That is why I am so pleased that we have so many speakers from so many countries here. I would like to wish you all a very fruitful discussion, a successful event and a pleasant stay in Warsaw.