

ITU Regional Development Forum for Europe (RDF-EUR)

Information and Communication Technologies for Attaining Sustainable Development Goals

Tuesday 26 May 2020 | 11:00 – 15:30 | Remote Meeting

<https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/Europe/Pages/Events/2020/RDF/Remote.aspx>

CONTRIBUTION submitted by

Eastern Partnership Electronic Communications Regulators Network

TITLE: Enhanced cooperation between EaPeReg and ITU on access to infrastructure, spectrum management, harmonisation of roaming prices and approach to roaming regulation

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Europe Regional Initiative: [Tick the relevant boxes or delete the irrelevant items]

EUR1: Broadband infrastructure, broadcasting and spectrum management

EUR2: A citizen-centric approach to building services for national administrations

EUR3: Accessibility, affordability and skills development for all to ensure digital inclusion and sustainable development

EUR4: Enhancing trust and confidence in the use of information and communication technologies

EUR5: ICT-centric innovation ecosystems

Year(s) of implementation: [Tick the relevant boxes or delete the irrelevant items]

2019

2020

2021

Background [max 300 words]

Eastern Partnership Electronic Communications Regulators Network (hereinafter referred to EaPeReg) is an independent platform of National Regulatory Authorities (NRAs) for electronic



communications networks and services of the Eastern Partnership countries¹, of NRAs of the EU Member States², of the Western Balkans³ and European Commission committed to progressing in implementing various aspects of digital economy, society and regulatory policies, including strategies for the development of broadband, harmonized spectrum allocation, more harmonized international roaming pricing, as well as strengthened independence of national telecom regulators (NRAs).

EaPeReg's work is performed by three expert working groups:

Independent Regulators and Broadband Expert Working Group's (**IRB EWG**) main goal is to support the EaP countries with drafting legislation, standards and best practices, with a focus on strengthening the independence of national telecoms regulators, and to ensure the secure and very high capacity Gigabit broadband infrastructure development in the EaP region and to align with European regulatory framework for electronic communications markets.

Roaming Expert Working Group's (**REWG**) goal is to reduce the price for roaming in EaP countries in order to ensure better pricing conditions for users while roaming, to achieve a harmonized approach on roaming regulation within EaP with the EU roaming regulatory approach, and to explore the possibility of establishing a common international roaming space between EaP and EU.

Spectrum Expert Working Group (**SEWG**) is focused on matters related to the development of coordinated frequency distribution strategies for releasing the 700 MHz band in the EaP countries. The approach is based on EU best practices in the process of freeing up and the reassignment of the 700 MHz band for 5G.

The development of a high-speed communications ecosystem, harmonising spectrum allocation and roaming pricing creates a valuable opportunity for an intensive knowledge and experience sharing via experts from different institutions. Broader cooperation is in turn, essential for achieving social, cultural and economic development in the whole Eastern Partnership region.

¹ Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine

² Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden, currently act as Advisors in EaPeReg – the network is open to the rest of the EU member states.

³ North Macedonia - currently acts as Advisor in EaPeReg – the network is open to the rest of the Western Balkans countries.



PROPOSAL [max 400 words]:

Close collaboration with ITU experts in the following thematic areas:

Access to infrastructure

Broadband infrastructure is and should be considered as critical infrastructure and for policymakers and sector regulators, achieving a secure, sustainable, high capacity broadband network should be one of the primary issues across all sectors of economies.

EaPeReg platform has been working towards the above mentioned targets, especially on developing well-sound broadband infrastructure, acknowledging common issues, as well as focusing on national circumstances of EaP countries.

Currently, within EaPeReg several projects are being realized, covering main directions of today's approaches in Europe, among them broadband mapping as a necessary ground for enhancement of already existing infrastructure in each EaP country and developing it to the very high capacity one.

The availability of information about telecommunication infrastructure is a prerequisite for market opportunities and efficient high-speed communications development. Within the IRB EWG of EaPeReg and corresponding ITU workshops, several approaches on infrastructure, investments, services, and demand mapping are being discussed. At least three EU countries adopted and presented advanced public projects on broadband mapping. Within the ITU platform, several ITU-D workshops have been held with the focus on broadband mapping, and IRB EWG experts had the opportunity to participate in one of them.

However, for EaPeReg universal connectivity - accessibility, affordability, inclusiveness of all - is not less important. These issues will be subject of EaPeReg further analysis and reports, along with adoption of national plans or strategies on broadband, in order to remove existing barriers and foster healthy telecom environment. Besides, broadband plans or strategies are to focus on connecting uneconomic areas and on creating conditions to stimulate the investments. As we are focusing on harnessing the benefits of the digital economy in general, working collaboratively with ITU experts will benefit both: the ITU and EaPeReg.

At the moment, adapting the experience to the regulatory and legal framework on a case-by-case basis in the EaP countries' conditions, requires further effort, and the ITU experts support is important especially on the issues related to the extension of secure and very high capacity Gigabit broadband and universal availability of broadband.

Consequently, the IRB EWG ongoing projects call for the ITU's experts' input on broadband mapping, launched in February 2020, in Warsaw, and to perform an analysis on universal service for broadband in the EaP region.

Spectrum management



As spectrum usage density is locally increasing, several countries are considering more advanced approaches of spectrum management, based on the involvement of new technologies and methods, e.g. Dynamic Spectrum Access. It potentially moves the society towards gigabit speeds in wireless communications. However, to facilitate such trends and successful implementation of such approaches in EaP countries, shared experience and involvement of ITU and other experts is a prerequisite to achieving tangible outcomes in the following topics:

- 5G corridors expansion to the Eastern Europe;
- LTE throughput calculations and coverage predictions;
- 5G license obligations;
- EMC exposure values and update (per country framework);
- 5G Specific Measurements and best practices;
- WRC-2019 results and impact on IMT bands;
- Cross Border Coordination of IMT Networks.

SEWG is seeking the ITU's experts' technical assistance during the SEWG meetings and its online work for all the above mentioned topics, in order to ensure their coherent implementation in the EaP region.

Harmonisation of roaming prices and approach to roaming regulation

International mobile roaming services play an important role in facilitating economic and social interactions, for trade as well as travel. In this context, EaPeReg strives to harmonise pricing approach and reduce roaming charges and hence increase the use of roaming services, and the citizens' welfare in the region, high level of consumer protection, choice and mobility, competition and transparency in electronic communications services market, including cross border co-operation.

Exchange of best practices between experts of ITU and EaPeReg will be beneficial for both organisations in their efforts in achieving an inclusive society, increased citizens' welfare, choice and mobility.

Taking into account the fact that the lockdown caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has proven that connectivity is a key element for gaining access to education, healthcare etc, and that the future of the economy depends on it in order to prosper, specialised organisations have to make common and sustainable efforts to properly address this matter.

Thus, EaPeReg proposes to extend the EUR1 and EUR3 initiatives beyond 2021, identifying specific needs in the region and to address them together with the experts of regional platforms, such as EaPeReg.

In the context of the joint work of the experts of EaPeReg and ITU, EaPeReg proposes a series of regional workshops to be organised by the ITU office for Europe throughout 2021.



Furthermore, based on the MoU between EaPeReg and ITU, EaPeReg invites the ITU experts to take part in EaPeReg workshop on 5G-Spectrum Auctioning, planned to take place in June 2020, and in the IRB EWG and SEWG meetings planned for October 2020.

During the IRB EWG and SEWG meetings in October 2020, as well as throughout 2021, matters such as universal service for broadband, 5G corridors expansion, WRC-2019 results and impact on IMT bands, etc. will be thoroughly analysed by the experts of EWGs and included in the Reports with recommendations for the EaP region, for which the ITU's experts' knowhow is of utmost importance.

EaPeReg on the other hand will further contribute to regional events of ITU and to its relevant working groups with discussions and the exchange of practices in the EaP region.

