BEREC Summary Report on the status of internet capacity, regulatory and other measures in light of the Covid-19 crisis

In a joint statement with the European Commission, on 19 March 2020, on how network operators can cope with the increased demand of network capacity, BEREC committed to a special reporting mechanism to ensure regular monitoring of the Internet traffic situation in each Member State, in order to be able to respond swiftly to capacity issues. Furthermore, BEREC is collecting information on other measures implemented by National Regulatory Authorities (NRAs) as well as on other initiatives by public and private parties throughout Europe.

This report focuses on, and summarises, the main updates of an ongoing, weekly information gathering exercise, and includes the most recent data provided to BEREC by its constituent NRAs as of 2 June 2020. 32[1] NRAs shared their data about the impact of the crisis on electronic communications networks and the actions taken so far in their respective Member States.

Please refer to the previous iterations of this summary report[2] for further details on some of the early measures applied by NRAs during the crisis.

The summary report will continue to be updated based on regular input from NRAs, with the next summary report due to be published on 12 June 2020.

1. Status of internet capacity

In general, traffic on fixed and mobile networks increased during the Covid-19 crisis, but no major congestion issues occurred.

6 NRAs[3] have provided updates on the status of internet capacity in their Member State since the previous information gathering exercise (26 May 2020). Please refer to previous iterations of the internet capacity summary report for further details on some of the early measures applied by NRAs during the crisis.

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[1] The following NRAs have contributed so far to the information gathering exercises: AL, AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, ME, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, RS, SE, SI, SK.
[2] The previous iterations of the summary report can be found at:
https://berec.europa.eu/eng/document_register/search/?reference_number=&title=summary+report&contents=&category_id=&date_from=&date_to=&search=1
[3] NRAs from the following Member States having provided updates since the previous data gathering exercise: CY, FR, NL, PL, PT, RO.

Key updates since previous report

- *CY, NL, PL, PT and RO have provided updates on the evolution of internet traffic on fixed and mobile networks;*

- *FR has reported a change in the frequency of collecting data from operators;*

- *PT has reported a drop in the number of tests performed by means of their measurement tool as well as in the number of end-users' complaints.*

1.1. Network issues raised by NRAs

In general, three phases in the evolution of internet traffic have been observed during the crisis: sharp increase, stabilisation and a decrease from the peak.

The following updates on the status of internet traffic have been reported:

For more than two weeks, CY is continuously reporting a slight decrease of data traffic on both fixed and mobile networks. In PT, the data traffic also continues to decrease. Similarly, RO has registered a decrease of overall data traffic in both fixed and mobile networks compared to the previous reporting.

NL has recorded a stabilisation of both down- and upstream traffic at levels above normal. Some ISPs reported a slight increase in downstream. The same NRA has mentioned that traffic on the internet exchange is stable compared to past weeks.

PL has reported that most of the operators' traffic flow slightly decreased during the last week when compared to the week before. However, data traffic volumes are still higher, especially during workdays, than compared to January and February.

1.2. Regulatory actions taken

NRAs are monitoring the situation and are regularly collecting data from ISPs and other market players about the status of their networks.

In FR, the frequency of collecting data has again been adjusted, namely ISPs only have to report to the Government and to the NRA if the status of their networks deteriorates.

PT has registered a decline in the number of tests performed by means of their measurement tool, which allows end-users to check the speed of their internet access service. The same NRA has also reported that the number of end-users' complaints diminished.

1.3. Actions taken and communication by operators

NL has reported that ISPs performed various continuous capacity expansions and traffic (re)balancing.

In PT, some peering connections were established by operators.

1.4. Further communication towards end-users

No updates have been communicated since the previous reporting period.

2. Other measures taken by NRAs, public institutions and market players

Key updates since previous report

- *PL reported decisions which affected the spectrum auction in the 3480-3800 MHz band and amendments to reservations for multiplexes in 700 MHz band;*

- *LV and FR reported about the launch of mobile application "Stop Covid".*

- *PT reported a decision related to the public consultation on the draft regulation of the spectrum auction. PT also reported the extension of exceptional and temporary measures to protect consumers.*

2.1. Measures to monitor the spread of Covid-19

BEREC has asked NRAs if there are any tracing applications/solutions in place in their Member State in order to monitor the spread of Covid-19. Information provided earlier to BEREC is available in the previous iterations of this summary report.

New information on the issue of tracing applications/solutions, as of 2 June, has been provided to BEREC by LV and FR. LV reported that mobile application "Stop Covid" was launched at the end of May. This app uses Bluetooth to anonymously detect nearby smartphones (within approximately 2 metres proximity, present for longer than 15 minutes) that also have this app installed. This information is only kept on a user's device, and automatically deleted after 14 days. The participants of the initiative group are different Latvian public bodies, universities, operators and other companies. FR also launched a mobile application called "Stop Covid" on June 2nd; it also uses Bluetooth for proximity detection, but its architecture does not involve the API provided by Google and Apple.

2.2. Measures relating to spectrum auctions

PL reported that on 20 May the President of the Polish regulator, UKE, opened proceeding for the annulment of the auction for frequency reservations in the 3480-3800 MHz band. The Polish regulator also issued decisions on amendments to reservations for multiplexes in 700 MHz band (700 MHz band was allocated for digital TV broadcasting services). This allowed for launching a process of broadcasters' migration to lower frequency bands, where the first stage of migration finished on 3 June 2020. It allows seamless development of broadband services in 700 MHz band without harmful interferences in the territory of neighbouring EU countries. PT reported that the consultation procedure on the draft regulation of the auction to

allocate the 700 MHz, 900 MHz, 1800 MHz, 2.1 GHz, 2.6 GHz and 3.6 GHz, which had been suspended due to COVID-19, has been restarted. The public consultation will end on 3 July.

2.3. Measures to protect consumers

In PT, the exceptional and temporary measures relating to the suspension and cancellation of electronic communications contracts have been extended until the end of September.