

BEREC - NEW EU COMMUNICATIONS BODY - IS ESTABLISHED

January 28th, 2010

Following the establishment of the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC) and the associated Office last December, the European Regulators Group held an extraordinary meeting today (Thursday, 28 January) in Brussels. This meeting put in place the necessary arrangements which will allow BEREC, the new body for co-operation among European National Regulatory Authorities and which provides advice to the European Institutions, to begin its work.

Today's meeting dealt with a range of issues necessary for the establishment of BEREC which replaces the European Regulators Group and assumes responsibility for additional tasks. The full range of tasks will be realised when the recently adopted Telecoms Package is transposed into national law by May 2011.

The agenda for the meeting included the following issues.

- The adoption of the Rules of Procedure for BEREC
- The election of the Chairs 2010 and 2011, and Vice Chairs for 2010
- A decision to consult on the draft BEREC work programme for 2010
- The recruitment procedure for the Administrative Manager of the Office
- Budget for 2010 and 2011

At the meeting John Doherty, chair of ComReg, the Irish communications regulator, was elected as the chairperson of BEREC for 2010 and Chris Fonteijn, chair of OPTA, the Dutch regulator, was elected chairperson for 2011 and automatically becomes a vice chair for 2010. In addition, two other vice chairs were elected for 2010. These are Reinaldo Rodriguez Illera, president of the Spanish regulator, CMT and Matthias Kurth, president of the German Regulator, BNetzA.

The meeting also decided to hold a public consultation on its draft 2010 work programme, based on the work programme adopted by the ERG. This public consultation will give all stakeholders throughout the EU the opportunity to make their views known about the work that will be undertaken by BEREC.

The meeting also decided to immediately initiate the process for the recruitment of an Administrative Manager of the Office, which will provide professional and administrative support to BEREC. In relation to this issue, BEREC endorsed the previously expressed ERG view that locating its secretariat in Brussels is the best way to achieve the effective and efficient functioning of BEREC. The reasons why Brussels is the preferred location include:

- Proximity to the EU Institutions is crucial to the successful operation of BEREC. One of the roles of the Office is to facilitate BEREC's communication with the EU Institutions, and its co-location with those Institutions is therefore important to enable it to carry out its role fully.
- Proximity to BEREC's Expert Working Groups, which the Office is responsible for helping to set up and support, is also crucial. Brussels has been, and is likely to remain, the preferred location for meetings of BEREC Expert Working Groups, given the need for close co-operation between BEREC and the Commission under the revised Framework and, in particular, under the new market review procedures.
- Transparency and Interaction with Stakeholders. The Office will also help ensure that BEREC's activities are transparent to stakeholders and to help BEREC be responsive to them. Locating the Office in Brussels would make BEREC easily accessible to stakeholder organisations, as well as the many media outlets with European operations, based in Brussels.

The incoming chair of BEREC, John Doherty said: "The establishment of BEREC is a significant development in the evolution of electronic communications sector throughout the EU. It will contribute to achieving the goal of a single market for European electronic communications. The creation of BEREC will give national regulators throughout the European Union a formal role at the highest level in the EU to bring about change and reform to the benefit of industry and consumers.

"2010 will be a very challenging year for the electronic communications sector throughout Europe. BEREC will play a full role in ensuring the further development of the EU-wide communications market for the benefit of all consumers and businesses."

"Developments are taking place across a range of markets, with consumers being offered a greater range of services due to changes in technology, growing convergence and enhanced competition. The purpose of BEREC is to ensure the consistent application throughout the EU of the regulatory framework for electronic communications networks and services. As part of its activities during 2010, BEREC will hold a public consultation on its work programme."

NOTES FOR EDITORS

The Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC) and the Office were established by the Regulation (EC) No. 1211/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2009. BEREC is comprised of a Board of Regulators consisting of Heads of 27 national regulatory authorities (NRAs). The EU Commission, EFTA States (Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein and three EU candidate States (Turkey, Croatia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) participate as observers to the Board of Regulators. The roles and tasks of BEREC are set out in articles 2 and 3 of the Regulation. The Office is a Community Body established by the same Regulation in order to provide professional and administrative support to BEREC.

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