

# Transparency in the scope of net neutrality (NN) *Status and perspectives*

Nadia Trainar – ARCEP Co-Chair of the NN Expert Working Group in BEREC

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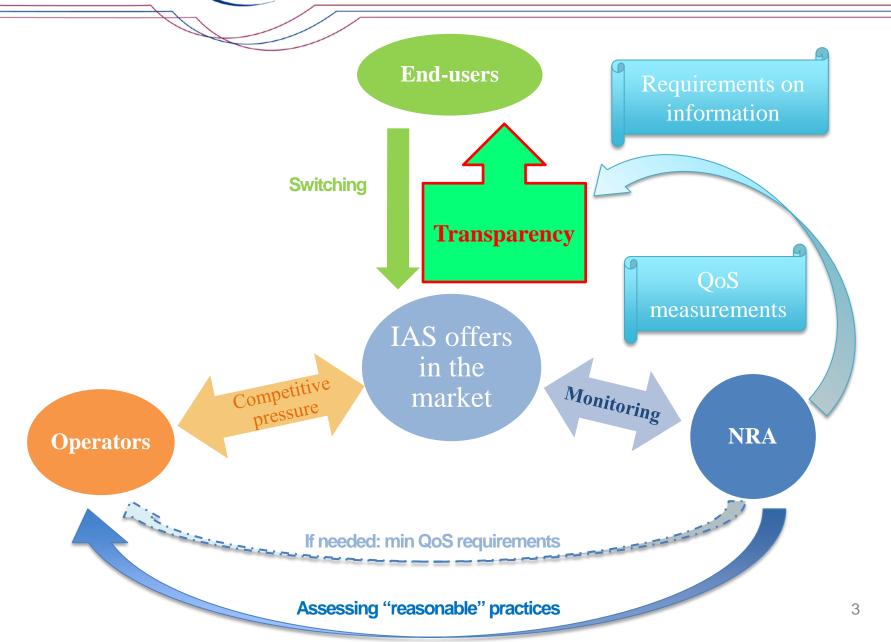
### **SUMMARY**

- Role of transparency in the regulatory approach to promote NN
- Are ISPs implementing BEREC recommendations?
  - Key areas of improvement
  - Challenges to an effective transparency policy
- Perspectives
  - The need to go further
  - The role of NRAs, the Commission and BEREC

I am so clever that sometimes I don't understand a single word of what I'm saying.

Oscar Wilde







Key BEREC recommendations (2011 Guidelines)	Observations
include all the categories of information - in an <i>accessible</i> place	Greater information provided:  - Scope of service (but low info on actual speed)  - General limitations like volume caps and fair use (though real-time tools are lacking)  - Specific limitations - TM & other differentiations (but some unclear concepts (e.g. "p2p"))
achieve <i>understandability</i> - empowering end users: <i>meaningful</i> explanations	<ul> <li>Some efforts but insufficient results</li> <li>Guides and definitions increasingly provided</li> <li>Information is too dense, technical, unattractive</li> </ul>
<ul><li>ensure <i>comparability</i></li><li>provide <i>accurate</i> data to third parties</li></ul>	Little achievements: Usually, no common terminology and references Very few comparison sites include NN-related info No monitoring in place to verify information



# **Key areas of improvement\***

- Adapt to users' expectations and concrete experience
  - The label "internet access" must be primarily related to <u>unrestricted service</u>
  - Distinguish from offers with application-specific measures
    - Why differentiations, what practical implications?
    - Meaningful explanation of policies (e.g. hours of streaming allowed vs. how many MB)
- Improve the format in which information is conveyed
  - Apply methods such as tiered approach and visual representations
  - Explain technical terms in <u>clear and simple language</u>
- Enable comparison at market level
  - Standard terminology must be fostered (primarily at national level)
  - <u>Centralized trusted tools</u> for QoS measurements need to be developed



# Challenges to an effective transparency policy

- Users' awareness and interest in NN is low
  - Results from a research published by Ofcom in September 2013:
    - Most consumers have very little knowledge about how the internet works
    - 11% of UK internet consumers are familiar with the term "traffic management"
    - 1% claiming to have considered this when choosing their broadband service
- ISPs develop practices which are increasingly sophisticated
  - Less blocking in several member states
  - More focus on prioritization or slowing-down of certain activities

Is there much to be expected from more transparency?



# YES: progress is <u>needed</u>, and useful

- A contractual obligation
- Consumers affected by ISP's policies must be able to access appropriate information
- Number may increase in the future
- Effect on the market
- Can "expert" users influence the others and foster market forces?
- Can a better awareness of the impact of NN modify users' purchasing decisions?
- → BEREC EcoDem project

However, even after a customer has reached their Fair Use Policy allowance, they will still be able to use their mobile phone for voice calls, text services, internet browsing and emails that do not contain attachments. That means they'll still be able to browse websites, login to Facebook,

check online email or read the news on them any extra.

Temporarily however, users won't be ab such as watching videos or downloading able to view videos on news websites su The duration of this temporary change v phone price plan or booster:

On pay monthly plans it will last or t

#### What do we mean by time-critical?

Activities that are considered highly time critical are even small delays in internet speed. Watching catch example because delays can cause the programme reduce the quality of the picture, which is particula catch-up TV on a larger TV screen.

Subscriber traffic management

We want all our customers to get the That means speedy downloads for all someone is downloading and/or uplc information over a long period of tim speed for other users in their area whor browsing the web. That's why we customers who are downloading and amount. That way, everybody gets gr happy.

Less time critical are services which can run "in the background". Peer to peer file sharing is an example- you don't have to react to this download while it is happening, and you can do other things at the same time — so if it takes 60 minutes compared to 50 minutes it won't make a big difference. We don't block this activity but we do restrict the amount of capacity it can use at peak time. And we don't restrict this traffic outside peak times — so you will find it runs as fast as all other internet traffic overnight or during the day (except on Saturdays, which are generally busier).

Examples of text dense format (from Kantar Media research)



# NRAs have a crucial role to play

- Users have a clear preference for information provided by independent 3rd parties
  - NRAs (through own publications or certification) are needed to
    - Guarantee a sufficient level of trust
    - Ensure the common application of detailed concepts and methodologies
- Importance of Quality measurements: to demystify abstract concepts, to compare
  - E.g. pre-purchase speed tests, post-purchase monitoring of traffic management
  - NRAs expertise on their market is essential for sound results. Cf. BEREC work.

# Is this reflected in the STM proposal?

- NRAs role in QoS measurement and monitoring is highlighted
- Commission has the main role in prescribing further transparency
  - However NRAs are best placed for a constructive dialogue with operators



## Thanks!

I know you believe you understand what you think I said, but I'm not sure you realize that what you heard is not what I meant.

Robert McCloskey