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 9 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 19 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.

5 NRAs[3] have provided updates on the status of internet capacity in their Member State since the previous information gathering exercise (2 June 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: BE, CY, ES, IT, MT.

> *Key updates since previous report*
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> - *CY, IT and MT have provided updates on the evolution of internet traffic on fixed and mobile networks;*
>
> - *BE and MT have reported a change in the frequency of collecting data from operators.*

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 three weeks, CY is continuously reporting a slight decrease of data traffic on both fixed and mobile networks. Similarly, IT has recorded a decrease of fixed and mobile data traffic during the week of 25-31 May 2020 compared to the week of 18-24 May 2020.

MT has reported that overall traffic remains stable. This is the case for fixed and mobile networks as well as for the internet exchange. Given the relaxation of the restrictive measures related to the containment of the COVID-19 outbreak on 5 June 2020, the traffic loads are expected to decrease gradually.

1.2. Regulatory actions taken

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

In BE, the weekly reporting on traffic by operators has been suspended.

In ES, the weekly reporting on traffic by operators has also been suspended, and only if there is a serious incidence in any network a report is requested.

In MT, the Authority requested providers to report only those instances where there is a sudden change in traffic patterns.

1.3. Actions taken and communication by operators

In IT, the main mobile operators offered SIM cards and devices free of charge to schools to be given to students and also offered unlimited data traffic plans to students. Additionally, one operator recently launched a zero-rating offer for a period of 12 months, which allows students to browse freely on the main e-learning platforms.

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

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

- *IT reported on the launch of mobile application "Immuni" and the trial phase in 4 IT regions*

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 9 June, has been provided to BEREC by FR and IT. FR launched a mobile application called "Stop Covid" on June 2nd, which uses Bluetooth for proximity detection, but its architecture does not involve the API provided by Google and Apple. IT launched Immuni, a Bluetooth (low energy) based app for contact tracing. After the data protection authority's green light on 1 June, the app was made available in Google Play and Apple App Store on 2 June. So far, 2 million users have downloaded it. On 8 June, a trial phase started in 4 Italian regions (Abruzzo, Liguria, Marche and Puglia) and it will soon be extended to the entire national territory.