

BEREC Action Plan for 2030

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BEREC vision for 2030

The internet has changed our way of living, fostering digitisation everywhere. Among various major developments and challenges, electronic communications have become indispensable for our society and economy. At the same time, the electronic communications sector itself is changing, notably due to the growing role played by digital services such as virtualisation and cloudification.

Consequently, the European digital policy framework is adapting to this ever-changing environment. In the 2030 Digital Compass, the European Commission underlined the importance of joint action to empower businesses and people in a human-centred, sustainable, and more prosperous digital future.

BEREC, the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications, is taking action to play its part in this evolution. From its inception, BEREC's core tasks have centred around promoting connectivity and competition in electronic communications, contributing to the internal market, and ensuring the consistent implementation of the regulatory framework for electronic communications.

Within its remit, BEREC has continuously adjusted itself to advance regulation as markets evolve and individuals' and businesses' needs change, for example by promoting net neutrality and open internet. Towards 2030, BEREC aims at actively facilitating and fostering open, secure, high-quality, competitive, and sustainable digital ecosystems that will be the key to empowering people and businesses in future societies.

BEREC will work actively to be a trusted independent expert body also in digital matters. It will adapt to new responsibilities in the digital field within its evolving legal remits. It will support its members and participants while they take on the challenges presented by changing markets and will continue to serve as a trusted adviser of the EU institutions. More than ever, BEREC will act as a guardian of internet openness, sustainability, and fair competition in digital ecosystems.

The action plan shows how BEREC and the NRAs, with the input of stakeholders, support and inspire each other to contribute to a regulatory environment in Europe 2030. A regulatory environment that will be fit for the digital age and the global context as well as fit to identify actions within the strategic orientations.

To this end, BEREC has identified **five strategic orientations** that will determine its future role in the run-up to 2030:

1. Fostering national and international connectivity to reach the objectives of Europe's Digital Decade by 2030.
2. Facilitating an open and sustainable internet ecosystem and supervising the evolution of the digital landscape.
3. Providing for the security and resilience of the networks and services.
4. Contributing to the achievement of environmental sustainability goals.
5. Strengthening BEREC's agility, independence, inclusiveness, and efficiency as a centre of expertise.

Strategic orientations and actions towards 2030

1. Fostering national and international connectivity to reach the objectives of Europe's Digital Decade by 2030

The EU's goal for Europe is to be the most connected continent by 2030. With the tools given by EU legislation (the EECC, the BEREC Regulation, the Roaming Regulation, the TSM Regulation, and any upcoming acts within BEREC and the NRAs' competence), BEREC and the NRAs will play a prominent role in contributing to achieve this goal by ensuring a harmonised application of EU legislation, creating incentives for investments for operators by ensuring legal certainty for all stakeholders, and by empowering EU citizens and businesses to allow them to benefit from high-quality connectivity at affordable prices.

BEREC actions:

- BEREC supports and facilitates policies that promote competition and infrastructure investments.
- BEREC and the NRAs commit themselves to work towards a harmonised application of EU legislation.
- BEREC will empower end users to make informed choices with data-driven regulation.

2. Facilitating an open and sustainable internet ecosystem and supervise the evolution of the digital landscape

The technological developments are changing the landscape from electronic communication networks and services to internet communications. New digital services and platforms are replacing traditional electronic communication services, some of which are located in adjacent markets, and offered by new players. Those market developments are impacting the

responsibilities – and thus the role – of the telecom regulators, which are now positioning themselves as regulators of the broader internet.

Taking account of the Digital Decade policy programme (DDPP) and in light of recent legislation, in the extended definition of electronic communications in the EECC, and in relation to digital services and markets (e.g., Digital Markets Act, Digital services Act, Data governance act, and Data Act), BEREC therefore has to adapt its approach to regulation to include (new) digital services and platforms and their providers in its portfolio to reflect the changing remit and the broader scope of activities of the NRAs. It can rely to do so on its long experience in ex ante regulation.

The digital transition of services also comes with a risk of vulnerable groups being excluded from participating in society, as recalled in the European Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles for the Digital Decade adopted by the Council and the European Parliament. Considering the new responsibilities for digital services and markets, BEREC is striving towards implementing the principles set out in the Declaration.

BEREC actions:

- BEREC is working in a structured way to be also a trusted and independent expert body on internet-related and digital matters.
- BEREC will advise and contribute to the more horizontal legislative processes by building on national experiences and data-driven digital tools.
- BEREC will contribute to the EU-wide effort to ensure that everybody can contribute to and benefit from the open internet and the digital world.

3. Providing for the security and resilience of the networks and services

The safety and security of electronic communications are paramount for a functioning single market. BEREC and its member NRAs are playing a vital part in ensuring the resiliency of communication networks. For example, by supporting the implementation of the EU toolbox for 5G security, in full coordination with other EU bodies and institutions. BEREC's expertise in bringing stakeholders together can help ensure balanced and future-proof approaches to building and maintaining resilient networks.

BEREC is well positioned to play a more active role in identifying the main spill-over risks between the electronic communications sector and other sectors (e.g., transport, energy, finance) in the event of a security incident affecting infrastructure, networks and services, and which measures could be considered effective for its mitigation. Among others, special attention should be given to submarine connectivity.

BEREC actions:

- BEREC will continue supporting the European institutions to strengthen the Union and its single market; especially the European Commission (EC) – as well as the Network

and Information Systems (NIS) Cooperation Group and the European Union Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA).

- BEREC will expand and build upon its expertise in security issues in critical infrastructures, including advising on drawing up recommendations to reinforce the resiliency of communication networks and infrastructures.

4. Contributing to the achievement of environmental sustainability goals

Under this strategic orientation BEREC is focusing on the achievement of environmental sustainability goals, in particular the environmental footprint of the ICT-sector.

As the issue of climate change receives more and more attention, the relationship between the digital sector and environmental sustainability has also come to the fore. Digital technologies and services have shown intensive growth in the last few decades, followed by an increasing awareness of the potential environmental footprint of the sector. The European Commission has addressed the connection between digitisation and the environment, especially in the context of the European Green Deal, but also in the Digital Strategy and the new European Industrial Strategy.

Sustainability refers to the principle of ensuring that our actions today do not limit the range of economic, social, and environmental options open to future generations. The ICT-sector is expected to contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development goals, e.g., to improve life quality, healthcare and learning, combat climate change, and eliminate the digital divide. While it is necessary to reduce the environmental impact of electronic communication networks and services as well as digital technologies (including their carbon footprint and other effects), these can play a key role in reducing energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions in several other sectors. In addition, BEREC aims to provide better information to end-users to allow them to make more sustainable choices.

BEREC should be ready to contribute to the Commission's call for input and the European Union's goals in this area. In particular contributing on the subject of the effective deployment of both the circular economy and energy-efficiency solutions in the lifecycle of broadband infrastructure and networks, as well as the subject of electronic communication services.

BEREC actions:

- BEREC will continue its work on assessing how to contribute to improved environmental sustainability by adding an environmental focus to its work streams. Doing so, it will take the objectives of the initiatives of the European Commission and Agenda 2030 into account.
- BEREC will contribute to the understanding of the main drivers of the digital environmental footprint, and the indicators and methodologies that could be used to achieve the European Green Deal targets.

- BEREC will contribute to increasing the transparency of environmental information intended for consumers and work towards raising awareness of these issues.

5. Strengthening BEREC's agility, independence, inclusiveness, and efficiency as a centre of expertise

To better address the challenges described above, BEREC will continuously improve its work processes, assess the skills needed and enhance its cooperation schemes with both EU and international bodies.

BEREC will strengthen its inclusive regulatory approach, allowing for the participation of all stakeholders, including NGOs and citizens in its processes; this will enhance BEREC's knowledge of the sector and help identify potential issues, with a view to bridging the digital divide and creating overall better public policies while staying true to its core expertise on ex-ante regulation.

In terms of regulatory tools, data-driven regulation, which has proved its efficiency in the electronic communications sector, could be sensibly implemented. Building on relevant data collection, this approach galvanises the power of information to steer the market in the right direction and will better enable end-users to make informed choices.

BEREC will work internally and with others on continuous upskilling. Expanding expertise, developing training schemes and similar actions for NRA staff would help build readiness to deal with regulation on digital matters. In this regard, the NRAs within BEREC and the BEREC Office will explore how best to reinforce their skills on emerging technologies.

Furthermore, in a context where there is a multiplication of competent bodies intervening on digital markets (for different legitimate goals and involving NRAs in multiple bodies in some instances), BEREC will develop actions towards strengthening institutional regulatory cooperation with relevant EU agencies and bodies involved in the digital environment. Similarly, BEREC will work with international bodies and authorities, which are confronted with the same challenges.

BEREC actions:

- BEREC will strengthen its prospective work to enhance its knowledge, both internally and with external experts, such as academics. BEREC will also develop training schemes for improving the expertise of the NRAs and BEREC Office staff.
- BEREC will strengthen its inclusive regulatory approach.
- BEREC will set up better structures for cooperation with the institutions responsible for related topics within the EU and with international bodies confronted with similar challenges.