

Press release

14 December 2023

BEREC clarifies the general authorisation and related frameworks for international submarine connectivity

Investment in and the modernisation of submarine telecommunications cables is essential to ensure connectivity across Europe and other continents. In order to reduce the costs associated with such investments, it is necessary to streamline the licensing and authorisation procedures for submarine cables. In line with its remit in the electronic communications sector, the BEREC has launched a public consultation on a draft report outlining the current authorisation regimes in place in the EU for the deployment of international connectivity infrastructure in this sector.

At today's public debriefing, the BEREC Chair Kostas Masselos (EETT, Greece) and the Co-chairs of the working groups presented the results of the latest ordinary meetings of the Board of Regulators, including [the draft report on the general authorisation and related framework for international submarine connectivity](#).

General authorisation of submarine connectivity

The document provides a brief overview of deployment and operation of submarine cable systems. It explains how the electronic communications regulatory framework applies to international submarine cable systems and examines the experience and powers of national regulatory authorities in this area. In addition, the report outlines national administrative authorisation procedures for international submarine cable systems. It also provides information on initiatives taken at the European and national level to promote global submarine connectivity. The BEREC experts conclude that although some countries have established national cooperation mechanisms and single points of contact between competent authorities, a comprehensive European policy is still needed. This should include international services or mechanisms, such as contact points at the European level, to assist stakeholders wishing to deploy a submarine cable system in more than one European country. The public consultation on the draft report is open until 24 January 2024.

Technological trends, cloudification, virtualisation and softwarisation

Cloud based networks are meant to significantly change the provision of electronic communications networks and services (ECN/S). These developments aim to improve cost and management efficiency of networks and services making scalability and network deployment more effortless and enable new services and business models based, for instance, on Network as a Service (NaaS) solutions. Moreover, network virtualization is expected to significantly impact the current value chain increasing its complexity. As a forward-looking body, the BEREC is closely monitoring new technological advances and has commissioned a [study](#) to identify and analyse the competitive and regulatory implications of these developments. This study describes the current state of the art of network virtualization and identifies potential regulatory implications stemming from these developments. The

results of the study will be presented at a workshop to be organized the first quarter of 2024. Ultimately, the study will serve as an input for the BEREC Report on Cloud and edge computing to be published for public consultation next March 2024.

[Competitive dynamics of tower and access infrastructure companies not directly providing retail services](#)

The electronic communications markets are undergoing a profound transformation as critical network assets able to support the deployment/rollout of the networks (both fixed and mobile), such as towers and access fibre infrastructure, are being divested. This trend is leading to the emergence of various companies who are not directly involved in the provision of electronic communications services to retail customers, but who nevertheless play a crucial role in the telecoms supply chain. In order to better understand this trend and its impact on competition at wholesale and retail level, BEREC commissioned an [external study](#) to gather evidence on the evolution of the tower and access fibre markets, as well as analyse the consequences of the divestments and spinoffs of assets have on the competitive scenery and identify the instruments available to address concerns when identified. Therefore, the document provides an overview of the main European infrastructure companies and their counterparts active in the UK and US and examines the associated business models used to manage, commercialise and exploit the key network assets. Competition and investment implications are reflected on and recommendations are made on regulatory possibilities to act when failures in the market may raise. In the future activities, BEREC will use the findings of the study to inform potential regulatory approaches and deepen the implications of assets' separation in reshaping the telecom sector, including in the context of other market developments within the digital ecosystem, to ensure competition, investment and innovation to the benefit of the EU citizens.

[BEREC's achievements in 2023](#)

Looking back at the work done in 2023 and the results achieved, the BEREC Chair Kostas Masselos acknowledged the joint efforts to achieve the goals. *"In 2023, BEREC reached significant milestones through collaborative efforts, successfully executing an ambitious annual Work Programme. Our projects tackled crucial regulatory issues, addressing IoT, cloudification / virtualization / softwarization of networks, while also focusing on tower / fiber access companies and low earth orbit satellites. Additionally, BEREC played a crucial role in contributing to the Connectivity Package, supporting the implementation of the Digital Markets Act (DMA), and actively participating in ongoing discussions about the Data Act. Our forward-looking approach is detailed in BEREC's Action Plan for 2030, providing guidance for BEREC's navigation of the evolving regulatory landscape in the coming years. BEREC remains committed in shaping a connected, competitive, and secure digital ecosystem, with a primary emphasis on sustainability and competitiveness for the benefit of end-users."*, he emphasized.

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Next year, the BEREC will be chaired by [HAKOM](#) (Croatia) and its Council President Tonko Obuljen.

[Save the date for BEREC events in 2024](#)

The 58th ordinary BEREC meeting will be held online on 7-8 March 2024. The subsequent public debriefing will also take place online on 13 March 2024.

On 26 March 2024, the BEREC will hold its main public event, the Stakeholder Forum, at the La Plaza Hotel, Brussels, Belgium. In the morning, the BEREC will hold Meet&Greet sessions with the Working Group Co-Chairs. In the afternoon, everyone is invited to attend the conference, which will conclude with a social networking reception.

[Public documents available online](#)

A [full list of BEREC's public documents](#) adopted at the 57th ordinary meeting is available on the BEREC website; the presentation and the video recording of the BEREC public debriefing will be available shortly.

[Note to editors](#)

We kindly invite you to contact us via communications@bereg.europa.eu if you would like to request an interview with the BEREC Chair or if you have any questions about the work of BEREC. Our team will be happy to assist you.

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