

Speech by the President of EETT  
Professor Nikitas Alexandridis  
at the EETT International Conference of Broadband Technology  
(Athens, June 1-3, 2007)

Honorable Commissioner Reding and Mr. Minister, Presidents of independent authorities, Professors, colleagues and friends, ladies and gentlemen,

I welcome you to the 2<sup>nd</sup> international conference on Broadband Internet organized by the Hellenic Telecommunications and Post Commission. This 2<sup>nd</sup> conference is marking the beginning of a new era in the sector of digital communications and broadband Internet in our country. An era that will create a new dynamic field of opportunities for more investments in the market. We are closing the first cycle of the preparation and incorporation of the regulatory framework into the Greek legislature and we are now opening the most important chapter, that of the strict and effective enforcement of the new national regulatory framework.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am certain that most of you here will agree that broadband infrastructure and services are the vehicle for the country's economic development in order to make it competitive in the "knowledge revolution" arena. They are the means which will allow the country to switch to an economy of services and allow the Greeks (without the need of huge capital and equipment investments) to produce services and high technology applications that can be exported and thus address not only the narrow market of the Greek consumers but the much larger global market. It is my personal opinion that Broadband Internet, in addition to tourism and shipping, can become the third pillar to support the economic development and progress of our country, and can be used as the vehicle of providing high-tech exportable services.

Today, the market of broadband communications and services is ready to take off in our country. We are at that crucial break-point, where only just a few additional incentives can provide the extra push needed in order to increase broadband demand, which in turn will exert the necessary pressure to speed up investments in the infrastructure. At the same time, competition is rising and demand and requirements are increasing to a point that -- I am afraid -- not all stakeholders have realized how unprepared this new situation will find us.

There are many difficult problems and challenges to be tackled. I will mention here only six:

1. **National strategy:** I have mentioned in the past that our political leaders must lead a national effort, with a long-term horizon, and set forth a comprehensive, publicly acceptable, ambitious and aggressive national strategy, so that -- for example by 2020 -- Greece can become a competitive country (on an international scale) for exportable high-tech services.
2. **Change of attitude:** We must all change our attitude (and maybe some players and institutions may also need to change their policies) and develop more efficient channels of communication, within a new climate of trust and enthusiasm.
3. **Coordination & simplification of procedures:** Ladies and gentlemen, our country will never be able to effectively take advantage of the rapid developments in electronic communications, under such a slow-moving system. The new technologies demand a bolder and much more flexible environment, better coordination of actions, simplification of procedures and a decrease in the number of institutions involved in each decision with, if possible, "one-stop-shop"-type solutions. The diffusion of responsibilities among a number of different Ministries and Institutions is in my opinion slowing down the fast development of such a dynamic sector, to the point that one might suggest that all these authorities involved with the new technologies be housed under one roof.
4. **OTE & Providers:** We observe that both the incumbent and the alternative operators are not ready to satisfy the increasing demand. OTE, on the one hand, must get ready at a rapid pace, in order to at least be able to follow the new procedures to comply with its regulatory obligations, while the alternative operators, on the other hand, must invest in the required infrastructure in order to be better able to offer the programs they advertise to consumers. Other relevant matters, such as termination dates of regulatory obligations or topics such as functional separation, we keep them on the table, in case competition is not advancing satisfactorily.
5. **Technophobia and the consumer:** Fighting the technophobia of citizens is another challenge, as are preparing our society to accept and embrace the new technologies and protecting consumers' interests, either through self-regulation of the industry or through strict measures that the National Regulator will be forced to impose.
6. **Digital television:** The necessary legislation for regulating market 18 (broadcasting market) must pass soon, issues on digital video contents must be studied, for both free-to-air digital platforms and broadband networks (wired and wireless) of the all-IP type, and the transition to digital television must be properly planned along with ways to reuse frequencies to be freed (the spectrum dividend).
7. **EETT:** And, finally, we come to EETT, where we have embraced the vision of creating -- over the next three years -- a completely free market

for electronic communications (fixed telephony, mobile and broadband) which would reflect all competition tendencies developing in Europe. In order to fulfill this vision we have set the following six goals:

1. Enhancement of competition of **fixed electronic communication services**, both for fixed telephony (where the incumbent's percentage will decrease to levels of respective organizations in European countries where there is strong competition) and in fixed broadband (for which we want in two years to have reached a penetration of 30% of the population).
2. Enhancement of competition in **mobile telephony services**.
3. Development of strong **infrastructure-based competition** to which all would have equal access, so that LLU broadband penetration will reach 35% of total broadband penetration in two years. Today we have already surpassed 70,000 LLU subscriptions, which represents 10% of total broadband lines as compared to 4% at the beginning of the year!
4. Development of **wireless broadband networks** (imposing the roll out obligations that WiMax license holders have) so that broadband Internet can soon spread into the countryside and in remote areas.
5. **Cutting-edge services** for the benefit of the consumer, such as
  - a) Fixed and mobile convergence (FMC), both for telephony and broadband, making sure we prevent companies with Significant Market Power to abuse their dominant position, and
  - b) Broadband digital services on various platforms (such as VoIP, IPTV, mobile TV, etc.)
6. And, finally, that the consumer benefits **fully from the transparency** we will impose on all services offered by the providers.

For any of the above challenges that fall under our responsibility, we are trying to come up with effective solutions. For those challenges that are not under the responsibility of EETT, we are prepared to actively provide assistance.

At EETT we are committed to use the regulatory tools we have at our disposal in order to achieve these goals, while at the same time making sure that everyone respects and abides by the rules of the game (both with regards to the competition among them as well as their attitude towards the consumer!). Also, we will soon be completing our strategic review, outlining the actions we plan to take over the next three years, in order to achieve our goals by 2011, which we will then present to the market for discussion next Fall.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In spite of the progress that is taking place lately, our country continues to hold the last position in Europe in the sector of electronic communications. We are running, but we must run faster. And when we are behind other European countries, we must all understand that we must make a greater effort and allocate more money in order to catch up. Therefore, let us look forward, find ways to overcome the problems and face the challenges I mentioned above with courage. We believe in our abilities and we believe that we can make it.

And before I leave you, I would like to make three announcements. First, EETT has set up a website providing useful information on broadband technology which you can visit through either the central EETT website or (in a few days) at the addresses `ευρυζωνικότητα.gr`, and `broadband.gr`. Second, EETT has just approved the new RBO, the new RIO and the "rights of way". And, third, the new reduced termination fees imposed by EETT on the three mobile telephone operators are coming into effect as of today.

We hope that this conference will give the opportunity to conduct a calm, fertile and constructive dialogue from which we will all learn and profit.

I thank you and I wish you an enjoyable conference.