

EETT's Role as a Regulator in the New Technological and Financial Environment



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The Greek Electronic Communications market continues to grow, despite the international financial crisis. Today consumers in Greece have the opportunity to enjoy innovative multimedia services, integrating telephony, Internet access and audio-visual content. The market is characterized by a concentration trend, with mergers, acquisitions and strategic alliances among providers. Companies are eager to join forces, to integrate their customer base and to climb the ladder of investment in order to confront competition and increase their average revenue per user.

Despite the optimistic trends regarding broadband penetration, it will take quite a while before Greece can actually bridge the "digital gap" that separates the centre from periphery and the country as a whole from the rest of Europe.

In this complex technological and financial environment, EETT's regulatory role is considered to be critical. Participation in the revision of the European Regulatory Framework, promotion of fixed and mobile telephony convergence, encouragement of healthy competition, regulation of mobile services termination fees, support of the development of Next Generation Access Networks (NGAN) and active participation in the state's digital planning, are very significant regulatory issues in the EETT's agenda. Our goal is on the one hand to ensure that the public has access to quality services at affordable prices and on the other hand to effectively regulate and supervise the Electronic Communications and Postal Services markets.

This vision is considered to be challenging for both the new EETT

Plenary and me personally. Our primary concern is to ensure a safe, stable, predictable and at the same time, flexible regulatory environment for the market to operate. Regulatory safety and stability, crystal clear market operation rules, rapid dispute resolution, imposition of penalties on providers who break the law, are all factors which will promote healthy competition and will stimulate investments, primarily in NGANs, while at the same time, effectively protect the consumer. In the same direction, we have set the goal of reinforcing transparency, informing the consumer prior to a contract, preventing overcharging, protecting from illegal practices. Finally, we shall promote EETT's co-operation with other Independent Authorities with whom our roles are totally distinguished, aiming at providing the consumer with the ability to choose the most suitable

provider, based on quality, pricing, connection speed and total service.

Moreover, ensuring qualitative broadband convergence for telecommunications and the media will continue to rank high in the new Plenary's list of priorities. It is a fact that Local Loop Unbundling (LLU) has contributed to substantial liberalization of the market and promotion of competition between OTE and alternative providers. Today, Greece is about to move towards a second revolution, a "digital leap" through investments in NGNs. However this change should come in a way that does not depreciate providers' existing investments in LLU.

The state's ambitious plan to develop an extensive fiber optic open access network (Fiber To The Home-FTTH) for all providers, which will cover at least 2 million households and businesses in 54 cities of Greece, is going to be of critical importance in order to meet the above mentioned goal. EETT supports this initiative and will provide all available resources to the newly established Ministry of Infrastructure, Transportation and Networks, so as to effectively promote this project. At any

rate, in view of the absence of alternative access infrastructure -such as cable television networks- EETT will encourage the deployment of any infrastructure or technology, wireless, cable or satellite, which may contribute to the development of the Electronic Communications sector and more specifically of broadband, in a way which shall not undermine the competition in the deregulated market.

Our main goal in this direction is to provide assistance to the state for the optimum use of the whole radio spectrum, in full compliance to the EU Law and in a manner that promotes the technologically neutral usage of this rare national resource for the benefit of all parties involved. In this context, it is very important that the state simplifies the licensing procedure of antenna constructions and also, provides accurate information to the public regarding the environmental consequences of wireless networks concerning coverage density in relation to radiation.

By starting with the renewal of GSM Mobile Telephony Licences which are expiring in 2012, EETT is willing to

participate in a public consultation with all the parties involved, exercising its competencies in order to facilitate the smooth transition to digital television and serving the best interest of the market, businesses and the customer.

As regards the Postal Services sector, evidently the challenge for the next four years will be the smooth and effective transition to a complete deregulation regime as of January 1st, 2013, according to the European Directive 6/2008 and the international commitments of Greece.

The particularly important and socially sensitive Postal Services sector is internationally recognized as a Service of General Economic Interest (SGEI). In the critical time remaining until full deregulation, we intend to use every regulatory and controlling tool available, so as to ensure reliable, competitive and advanced Postal Services to all citizens.

In 2009 we will submit to the Ministry of Infrastructure, Transportation and Networks a draft proposal of a Law for the full implementation of the postal Directive, along with all the necessary transitional clauses. We hope that this plan will become the basis for a fruitful consultation in order to speed up the processes and to provide adequate time for market preparation.

Personally, I intend to include the "postal agenda" in the Conference of the European Regulatory Authorities' Presidents. Bearing in mind the upgrade of the National Regulatory Authorities' role determined by the new postal Directive, I consider this initiative to be necessary in achieving greater harmonization of the postal regulatory framework Europe-wide for the benefit and protection of the consumer.

In conclusion, EETT, an Independent Authority, with high reliability, accrued experience and highly qualified scientific and managerial staff, is ready to efficiently stand up to the challenges of the new digital era.

