



7.4. International Relations

The dynamic sector of electronic communications is not restricted to the confined limits of a country, but has an international character and is affected by the general developments in the other markets. Thus, for the NRAs for electronic communications, the bilateral, European and international relations are an integral part of their current work.

The importance of international relations for EETT is inextricably linked to its vision to constitute a dynamic European NRA, which will go along with international developments and will adhere to the same principles, laws and practices that apply in the rest of Europe. EETT is not confined to the monitoring of current European developments, but actively participates in the formulation of common positions for the resolution of issues that concern all NRAs in Europe. The participation of its executives in the relevant European groups is the main diffusion method of this knowledge and experience internally, aiming at the more effective exercising of its role to the benefit of the market.

During 2003, EETT continued the collaboration with a large number of NRAs, as well as with European and international organisations on issues of its competence in electronic communications, the radio spectrum and post offices.

7.4.1. European Union

New Regulatory Framework

The new European Regulatory Framework, as a continuation of the former one, which focused on the facilitation of the transition from a market with monopolistic characteristics to a fully liberalised one, aims at the development of the unified electronic communications

market in the European Union (EU) and the safeguarding of the competition's operation in every relevant market of the sector. The milestone date was the 24th of July 2003, on which the member-states had the obligation to institute and publish the necessary legislative, regulatory and administrative provisions which would harmonise their national law with all European Directives.

With the new Framework, the role of the NRAs, which undertake the principal responsibility to implement and enforce it, is strengthened. The NRAs are also responsible for the definition and analysis of relevant markets that need to be regulated, the safeguarding of the competition's operation in the aforementioned markets, and the designation of Organisations with Significant Market Power (SMP), on which, if it is deemed necessary, they impose specific obligations for the achievement of the aforementioned goals.

European Committees/ Groups

In 2003, EETT continued to participate in the proceedings of Committees and Groups of the European Commission, which among other things, consult and assist the Commission in establishing the internal market for electronic communications networks and services. In these, the following are included:

- Communication COMmittee - COCOM.
- Telecommunication Conformity Assessment and Market Surveillance Committee (TCAM) for the implementation of Directive 1999/5/EC.
- ADministrative COoperation Group (ADCO).
- Internet Informal Group (IIG).
- Postal Directive Committee.

Furthermore, EETT participated in the proceedings of a series of Groups that treat the critical issue of Electronic Signature:



- The Forum of European Supervisory Authorities for Electronic Signatures (FESA).
- The European Electronic Signature Standardisation Initiative (EESSI).

ERG⁶⁹

2003 was the first year of full operation of the newly founded European Regulators Group (ERG), which was established by a Decision of the European Commission. The Group's goal is to constitute the cohesion link between the NRAs and the European Commission and to assist in the consistent implementation of the new Regulatory Framework in all member-states. EETT responded to the Group's undertakings, participating in all the Plenary Meetings of the Presidents. The results of the Group's work include, among others, the following:

- A Working Paper for the definition of SMP, ERG(03)09.
- Adoption of a common position on the implementation procedures of Article 7 of the Framework Directive 2002/21/EC, according to which the NRAs are obliged to notify to the European Commission and to other NRAs, the analysis results for each one of the 18 relevant markets defined by the Commission.
- Adoption of the "Common Approach" plan⁷⁰ to the selection of appropriate remedies imposed by the NRAs to Organisations with SMP, as they are defined in the Commission's Recommendation on relevant markets ERG(03)30.
- Approval of the Report by the Independent Regulators Group (IRG) on the designation procedures of the Universal Service Provider (USP), ERG (03)38.

IRG

The IRG was founded in 1997 by independent NRAs, aiming mostly at the exchange of experiences and practices on issues that concern the regulation and development of the European telecommunications market. EETT is a member of the Group and actively participates in the proceedings of the President Plenary Meetings and in the individual Working Groups.

During 2003, the IRG published a series of Principles of Implementation and Best Practice (PIBs), focusing on the alignment of the regulatory practices on a European level and on the maintenance of transparency in the activities of the Group.

9th Report⁷¹

The 9th Report on the Implementation of the EU's Regulatory Measures Bundle on electronic communications was adopted by the European Commission in November 2003. The Report recognised that the situation in the electronic communications markets seems to have been stabilised and the interest and the trust of undertakings and consumers was renewed. It was stressed that broadband services and mobile telephony will constitute the driving force of development in the time to come. In this context, it was remarkable that in four member-states, 3G Mobile Telephony Services are already provided. At the same time, special mention was made to the Commission's concern on the regulatory condition that prevailed in several member-states, which had not integrated the new Framework into their national legislation.

⁶⁹ <http://www.erg.eu.int>.

⁷⁰ The final text (Joint Approach on Remedies) is expected to be adopted in April 2004 and will take into consideration the results of the relevant Public Consultation.

⁷¹ http://europa.eu.int/information_society/topics/ecomm/all_about/implementation_enforcement/annualreports/9threport/text_en.htm.



The Report focused mainly on issues that concern the alignment, rather than on a review for each member-state separately, as was the case in previous Reports. EETT sent the relative data, which was included in the Report's 2nd Appendix and depicted the regulatory situation in Greece, in the electronic communications sector. Finally, the Report stressed that the Commission will closely monitor the compliance of member-states with their obligations in what concerns, among other things:

- a) The wider responsibilities that have been assigned to the NRAs.
- b) The ease of the NRAs to implement all the regulatory obligations as they are defined in the Framework, when they conclude that there is not adequate competition in a market.
- c) The timely completion of market analyses and the examination of obligations in force by NRAs.
- d) The principles that must be applied for the procedure of transit and frequencies use rights.

7.4.2. EETT Participation in International Bodies

In 2003, EETT continued to participate in international bodies for issues of its competence. An EETT representation from the Spectrum Management Directorate attended the proceedings of the World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC-03) that took place in Geneva, under the auspices of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU)⁷². The goal of the Conferences was the systematic renewal of the database for the allocation and use of radio spectrum and satellite orbits, as this is the forum that sets and updates Radio Regulations (RR).

In what concerns the Conférence Européene des Postes et Télécommunications (CEPT)⁷³, EETT participated in the

11th Conference of the organisation, where the goal was to assess the developments that affect the regulation of telecommunications issues. The Conference aimed at placing all the regulatory actions of telecommunications issues, wireless or not, in a common perspective.

Finally, EETT executives from the Spectrum Management Directorate attended a series of meetings of relevant Working Groups of the Electronic Communications Committee (ECC)⁷⁴, which aimed at the achievement of consent in European interests concerning electronic communications issues.

7.4.3. International Collaborations

EETT's goal is to collaborate with other Regulatory Authorities, with the purpose of gaining valuable experience and know-how and exchanging views, or acting as a consultant, as for in example in the case of its partners in the area of Southeastern Europe.

In this context, in 2003, EETT welcomed a representation from the Italian Regulatory Authority, in order to be informed on cost issues, exchanged visits with the Romanian Regulatory Authority for issues of mutual interest and welcomed a relevant representation from Cyprus in order to provide information to the latter on issues of Number Portability.

In October 2003, following its own initiative, EETT hosted the 1st IRG meeting with Regulatory Authorities from countries of Southeastern Europe.

The meeting's aim was to establish cooperation between the Regulatory Authorities of Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey, and the Regulatory Authorities of

⁷² <http://www.itu.int/ITU-R/conferences/wrc/wrc-03/index.asp>.

⁷³ <http://www.cept.org>

⁷⁴ <http://www.ero.dk>



the other European countries. In the meeting, Presidents and experts of Regulatory Authorities participated and the discussions focused on the exchange of views on a series of regulatory issues, such as licensing, Universal Service (US), market analysis and competition issues, broadband services, Interconnection and the costing principles in telecommunications.

Finally, EETT participated in the 1st conference organised by the Regulatory Authority of Monte Negro, aiming to record the NRAs responsibilities and problems in the wider Balkan area.

7.4.4. Organisation of IRG/ ERG Summits

On the 19th and 20th of May 2003, EETT hosted the Plenary Summits of IRG and ERG Presidents. In the proceedings of the Summits, Presidents and representatives from respective NRAs from 28 European countries participated, as well as high ranking executives from the European Commission, among whom the Head of the General Directorate "Information Society".

During the IRG Summit, institutional issues were mainly discussed, which concerned the preparation for the implementation of the new Regulatory Framework in the EU member-states. In what concerns the Summit of the ERG Group, the principal issues discussed were, among others, the definition of obligations on telecommunications providers that have been designated as SMP operators in markets where the competition is not developing sufficiently, the wholesale provision of xDSL services, the accounting separation as well as the costing methods. Furthermore, two European Commission Decisions were also discussed, according

to which the common use of network infrastructure by 3G service providers is allowed, in the United Kingdom and Germany.

In the additional discussions between the Presidents and the European Commission on current issues of regulatory interest, issues such as the use of GSM Gateways, the consequences of traditional PSTN lines substitution, the regulation of wholesale xDSL services provision, the call termination on mobile networks and the interoperability, were discussed.

The European Commission representatives underlined the necessity for timely and effective implementation of the new Regulatory Framework, which aims at ensuring that consumers continue to benefit from various options, the quality of services and the advantageous prices. Furthermore, the crucial role of the NRAs for the implementation of relevant rules in a consistent manner in all member-states, was stressed.

7.5. Conference "Telecommunications: Three Years of Liberalisation"

On the 9th of December 2003, upon the occasion of three years since the liberalisation of the Greek telecommunications market, EETT organised a conference entitled "Telecommunications: Three Years of Liberalisation"⁷⁵. The conference's goal was to discuss the evaluation of the liberalisation process, the electronic communications development policies and the perspectives of the telecommunications market, as well as to exchange views under the light of the New Regulatory Framework.

Among the speakers in the conference were the European Commissioner of the IS, Mr. Erkki Liikanen and

⁷⁵ More information is available in EETT's website, <http://www.eett.gr>, Publications/ Conferences-Events Sections.