



RAPID DEVELOPMENT NEVER ENDS

Despite the economic downturn, Greece telecommunication sector continues to grow. The government has announced an ambitious plan for a fiber optic network, too.

Greece is struggling with an economic downturn for about 3 years. But the ICT sector of the country is growing without losing a momentum. While the country is still trying to find a formula to rescue from the economic crisis, ICT sector is growing with new investments and governmental plans. Dr. Leonidas Kanellos, President of the Hellenic Telecommunications and Post Commission (EETT) and Year 2013 Term President of BEREC, says the electronic communications sector is the core of EETT's competences. According to Kanellos, this, for the past few decades has been an important vehicle for the country's economic development, with substantial investments. The past ten years, since EETT was established in its current form and acquired the necessary in-

struments to promote competition, the country has experienced real strides in the development of the market. Greece has jumped from been dead last in broadband penetration as well as in broadband development, to becoming one of the fastest developing European markets. Analysis show that for the past three years, Greece shows either at the top or among the top 3-4 European countries in terms of broadband penetration increase and of course has climbed quite a few positions in the broadband penetration ranking. "This revolutionary change has been the result of effective competition, reinforced by the effective unbundling of the local loop" says Kanellos, mentioning that it is quite interesting that this tendency continues despite the heavy economic downturn, which nevertheless has had a substantial impact to the market, hurting economic results and rapidly slowing down uptake. Dr. Kanellos says, investments in the fixed are primarily directed towards high speed access networks, notably FTTC/ VDSL. "The Greek government has announced an ambitious plan for a fiber optic network" says Dr. Kanellos and shares information about the situation:

"In view however of the deep crisis, it remain to be seen, if such an ambitious project will

eventually move forward. In the mobile sector, we expect to see investments in mobile broadband networks, notably by means of LTE technologies. At this point however there may be a more pressing need for investments, imposed by the provisions of the recent European Roaming Regulation, which asks mobile operators to implement certain structural measures, such as the decoupling of international roaming services from domestic mobile services."

Sustainable and efficient competition

Dr. Leonidas Kanellos, also Year 2013 Term President of BEREC, gives information about this group. Accordingly, BEREC was established in 2009, as the successor of ERG (the European Regulators Group). It is composed of a Board of Regulators consisting of the Heads of the 27 national regulatory authorities (NRAs). Candidate countries, including Turkey, as well as the EFTA countries (Iceland, Norway and Switzerland) also participate as observers. BEREC's role is to advise the European Commission and the NRAs, and assist the European Parliament and Council, on issues related to the application of the EU regulatory framework for electronic communications. Acknowledging the important developments and challenges ahead, BEREC strategically focuses on three main areas. Firstly, BEREC will seek to promote both sustainable and efficient investment and competition in high speed broadband infrastructure and services, by promoting regulatory approaches and practices, which enhance competition and provide the right incentives for investment in new (fixed and mobile) high-speed networks. Secondly, BEREC focuses on the consumer, recognising the increased emphasis of the regulatory framework on thire protection of consumers and acknowledging that the promotion of competition in itself cannot always ensure that end users profit optimally from all possibilities. Thirdly, BEREC will continue to make a strong contribution to the internal market, by promoting the development of competitive cross border services.

Expert opinions about new trends

"BEREC will help to ensure fair competition and consistency of regulation in the internal market for electronic communications to benefit consumers" says Dr. Kanellos, mentioning in particularly providing expert advice on market definitions, analysis and remedies, definition of

transnational markets, cross-border disputes and numbering issues. "Furthermore, BEREC will provide expert opinions on emerging challenges such as the promotion of broadband, net neutrality and converging markets, and is ready to play an active role in the discussions in the public domain on these issues" says Dr. Kanellos and continues:

"The priorities of BEREC for 2013 are to a large extend defined in the Medium Term Strategy, which was adopted and published in February 2012. The main focus will of course continue to be BEREC's contribution to the realisation of the internal market, by promoting regulatory approaches and best practices in areas where differences impede the internal market, by ensuring compliance of NRAs remedies with the European Regulatory Framework, as well as by providing advice to the EU Institutions on draft legislation and regulation."



Dr. Leonidas Kanellos, President of the Hellenic Telecommunications and Post Commission (EETT) and Year 2013 Term President of BEREC

"Digital Agenda 2020 pose new challenges"

EETT advises the Greek policy makers on issues relating to the status and development in the Greek electronic communications market. "EETT's mission is to ensure a level playing field in electronic communications, which will safeguard competition, promote investments and guarantee consumer interests" says Dr. Kanellos and says, "In this task EETT applies the provisions of the European Regulatory Framework. Today the revised framework and the Digital Agenda 2020 pose new challenges to the regulation of hte Greek market, the most important relating to the emergence of Next Generation Access networks, in a manner that respects the provisions of the European Framework and particularly those set out in the NGA Recommendation."