86th Meeting of the Communication Committee- 21 June 2022 via videconference

Summary report

(1) Opening remarks and adoption of the agenda

The Chair started the meeting by informing delegates about the impacts of COVID-19 on the work of committees covered by Regulation 182/2011, including COCOM.

In the attempt to return to normal conditions, the last meeting of the Communication Committee last November was organised in a hybrid mode, in presence in Brussels, but with the possibility of connecting remotely via videoconference.

However, in order to reduce the risk of further spreading the virus as well as the carbon footprint generated by offline meetings, as a general rule, the Commission decided to hold committee meetings by videoconference, while still maintaining the possibility to organise meetings in presence would the need arise (i.e. in case of important discussion and/or voting procedures).

The Chair then proceeded to inform the delegates about the data retention period and proposed the adoption of the agenda (COCOM22-02), which was adopted without changes.

(2) Update on ongoing initiatives from the European Commission

- Connectivity Toolbox and review of the Broadband Cost Reduction Directive

As regards the Connectivity Toolbox, by 30 April 2022, Member States should have provided the Commission with reports on the implementation of national roadmaps.
At the time of the meeting, 21 Member State submitted the implementation reports which have been published in the Commission’s website.

Therefore the Commission services called upon the remaining Member States to provide the Commission with their implementation reports as soon as possible in view of the final meeting of the Connectivity Special Group planned on 29 June where an overview of the implementation reports will be discussed.

As regards the review of the Broadband Cost Reduction Directive, the Commission services reported that it is now in the final phase of drafting the reviewed legislative proposal building on some of the best practices of the Connectivity Toolbox.

- **116-016 helpline for Violence against women and victims of domestic violence and on the 116 initiative for an helpline for elderly citizens**

On the 116-016 helpline, the Commission services recalled that the German Presidency launched in 2020 an initiative to reserve a harmonised helpline number (116 016) to victims of violence against women.

The service enables victims of all forms of violence against women to seek assistance and emotional or practical support, to be informed of their rights and ways to claim their rights, and to be referred to the relevant authorities, services and organisations.

The proposal for a directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence, adopted on 8 March 2022 contains a provision requiring both that Member States set up and operate such helplines, but also that these national helplines shall be operated under the harmonised number to be reserved on the EU level. This helps to ensure sufficient take-up for the number. Negotiations on the proposal are ongoing in the Council on working party level.

The Commission services also recalled that initiative was presented at the meeting of the Communications Committee on 16 February 2021 and that no objections or comments were made by the members of the Committee. By March 2021, 15 Member States have provided declarations of commitment, and all but two have also provided a declaration by a helpline service provider. The initiative was also presented at an ad-hoc expert group meeting on 28 September 2021 and the progress presented at the meeting of COCOM on 16 November 2021. By the end of 2021 all the elements necessary for the reservation of an EU wide helpline number were reunited and the necessary consultations took place to verify this.

The Commission services recalled that the internal procedure to adopt an amendment of Commission decision 2007/116 for its annex to include the title, number and service description of the new helpline started in early 2022. The next steps in the procedure are: the adoption of a BEREC opinion, which is needed for the adoption of the decision. This opinion will be adopted by BEREC at the earliest in its meeting on 5 October; and then the adoption of the amending act by COCOM, which is foreseen by its meeting on 15 November.

The second initiative presented during the ad-hoc meeting in September 2021 was a ‘116 100’ helpline for elderly citizens.

A discussion on the initiative took place and the Member States’ representatives were asked to confirm if they agree that both the number and the service – elderly citizens’
helpline – are in principle eligible to be included in the list of harmonised numbers for
harmonised services of social value (candidate service complies with requirements of the
Decision).

The Commission services highlighted that during the last COCOM Meeting in November
2021, Members were requested to express their view and indicate whether they agree that
both the number (‘116 100’) and the service (elderly citizens’ helpline) are in principle
eligible to be included in the list of harmonised numbers for harmonised services of social
value (i.e. candidate service complies with requirements of the Decision) by end of
December 2021.

To date, however, only 4 Member States expressed support towards the inclusion of this
service in the list of harmonised numbers. Therefore, the Commission services consider
this procedure suspended at the moment. While there are no specific provisions that deal
with suspended procedures, the Commission services would continue to provide support
to the establishment of this 116 number if other Member State come forward with their
support, but reserves the right to close the procedure if no other Member States provide
support within one year.

The Commission services clarified that the harmonisation of 116 helpline number at EU
level only obliges the Member States to have the number available and to designate it for
the specific service it was harmonised for. Member States are not obliged to activate or
provide the specific service within their territory.

(3) Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2020/1070 of 20 July 2020 on
specifying the characteristics of small-area wireless access points- results of Member
States reporting

The meeting continued with a presentation on the reports submitted by the Member States,
in line with the Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2020/1070 of 20 July 2020
on specifying the characteristics of small-area wireless access points.

The Chair highlighted that at the time of the meeting only 14 MS have submitted relevant
reports. The data contained in the report will help the Commission services to better
address the impact of the measure on network densification through small cells, ensuring
that the general public is protected against the Electro-Magnetic Field and the deployments
are visually coherent.

The Chair noted that reporting in this case is not voluntary but mandatory. Article 4 of the
Implementing regulation has been agreed by the Member States, which are therefore
obliged to implement it. The Chair also noted that the lack of data also shows that the
reporting obligation is not met and stressed that Member States should provide the means,
preferably electronic means, for the preparing the national SAWAPs inventory and urge
the operators to submit data.

The Chair concluded by urging the Member States to fulfil their obligation for the 1st
reporting cycle before considering further measures falling within the European
Commission remits in order to safeguard the proper functioning of the Union's legal order.
The Commission services then proceeded with a presentation on the data reported so far by the Member States and on the next steps.

At the end of the presentation, representatives of different Member States reported difficulty in the reporting exercise, which the Commission services proceeded to clarify.

The Chair concluded by inviting once again the Member States who did not submit their report yet, to do it as soon as possible and that the communication channels with the Commission services are always open would there be the need for clarifications on the exercise.

(4) Commission Implementing Regulation on the list of blocked and reserved .eu second level domain names

The Member States communicated their lists of .eu blocked and reserved second level domain names to the Commission last February. The Commission services are now finalising the draft text of the implementing regulation and will submit it to COCOM Members to vote via written procedure in the coming weeks.

(5) Any other business

The Chair closed the meeting by informing delegates that the next COCOM meeting is scheduled to take place in September 2022. Further details will be provided closer to the date.