

INTRODUCTION

In 2013, the work of the Communications Regulation Commission was devoted to achieving the goals of the regulatory framework for electronic communications using the available regulatory tools. The Commission's priorities during the year are in line with the processes and trends for development of the market for electronic communications networks and services.

As a national body assigned with the function to regulate the electronic communications markets, the Communications Regulation Commission (CRC/the Commission) completed the second round of the procedure for definition, analysis and assessment of the retail markets for access to the public telephone network at a fixed location and publicly available telephone services provided at a fixed location. The adopted regulatory measures are aimed at protecting and promoting the competition and the entry of new undertakings on the relevant markets with a view to expand the options of choice for the end users. They created a predictable regulatory environment for the undertakings operating on the market.

In the conditions of non-discrimination and transparency, as provided by the Bulgarian legislation, the Commission continued to carry out monitoring, analysis and assessment of the performance of specific obligations imposed on the undertakings with significant power on the relevant retail and wholesale markets of electronic communication networks and/or services. In 2013, the Commission determined - through its BULRIC model - cost-oriented rates for termination on individual mobile networks and for origination/termination on fixed networks. As of 1 July 2013, the mobile termination tariffs were reduced by over 50%, and the fixed origination and termination tariffs were decreased by more than 40%.

During the year, intensive activity was carried out concerning the efficient management of the radio frequency spectrum. In addition to the performed analyses and frequency planning related to the process of introducing the digital terrestrial television broadcasting, CRC announced its intention to conduct a tender and issue authorizations for the frequency band 2500-2690 MHz. Public consultations were also held on the prospects for use of the free resources in the frequency bands 1800 MHz, 2 GHz and the frequency band 3400-3600 MHz. The results of the two procedures showed that, at this stage, the undertakings are not interested in the specified bands.

To create conditions for development of a competitive communications sector, CRC also conducted public consultations on the terms under which the mobile operators could provide or use the "national roaming" service. As a result of the received opinions of stakeholders, the Commission resolved that, upon request, the national roaming service shall be provided on the basis of free commercial contracting between the undertakings.

With the commissioning of the remote-controlled radio monitoring station on the territory of the Pleven District, CRC completed the building of the National system for RFS monitoring. It comprises 15 fixed stations (manned and remote-controlled) and 8 mobile stations for radio monitoring. The long-term project implemented by the regulator will ensure a continuous and efficient monitoring of the frequency spectrum on the entire territory of the country which will contribute to the maximum optimization of the Commission's work.

In the past year, an important process for the Bulgarian society was accomplished - the transition from analogue to digital television broadcasting. The successful complete transition to digital terrestrial television broadcasting is to a great extent due to the work carried out by CRC in execution of the tasks set forth in the "Plan for introduction of terrestrial digital television broadcasting" (2012 Plan) adopted by the Council of Ministers. In implementation of the European Commission's recommendations, the Commission conducted a tender procedure and issued an authorization to one more multiplex operator. This created prerequisites for the entry of one more player to the market with the purpose to boost the competition.

In 2013, the Commission continued to work on one of its main priorities - protection of the interests of the end users. In order to help the users to be better informed, to make a better choice of the services offered on the market, and to get assistance, CRC continued its initiative

for organizing temporary reception-rooms throughout the country. Moreover, a considerable amount of work was carried out in relation to the review and processing of the filed complaints. This activity enabled the Commission, on the one hand, to identify the unlawful practices applied by the undertakings, and on the other hand - to solve the problems when the issues fall within the powers of the regulator. To achieve a permanent solution of the established problems, the Commission undertook a series of actions within the scope of its competence to guarantee the high-level protection of the interests of users.

In the conditions of a dynamically developing electronic communications market at both European and international level, the Commission attaches an increasing importance to its interaction with the European institutions and its international activity in accomplishing the set goals. The maintaining of an active dialogue with the European Commission and the participation of the Bulgarian regulator in the work of BEREC¹, IRG², ETSI, ITU and other international organizations contribute to the introduction and use in the national practice of the best regulatory European and international approaches.

¹ Board of European Regulators for Electronic Communications

² Independent Regulators Group