

High Level Session on 'ITU enabling the wireless ecosystem' WSIS Forum 2017, 12 June 2017, 16h30

Dr Dražen Lučić, President of Council, Croatian Regulatory Authority for Network Industries (HAKOM). Croatia

Mr. Secretary – General,
Distinguished Ministers and Excellences,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Good afternoon.

Thank you, Secretary – General Houlin Zhao, for the invitation to address the World Summit on the Information Society. It is both an honour and a pleasure to be here at this esteemed event that brings together an exceptional blend of policy makers, industry leaders and innovative people. Almost every country pursue the promotion of access to ICT, but it is also essential not to forget the need to capacity building and for a local content bearing in mind specific local conditions and creating a local eco-system. We can't talk about the digital market that reaches everybody without the connection to the internet, since there is no digital service available without internet. The backbone of the digital market is, of course, the network but high speed networks today are not only wireline. There is a huge potential in a wireless networks.

Rural areas cover the majority of Croatian national territory, including 1200 islands, and population density there is low. Today's rural areas are faced with numerous problems like exposure to degradation process with significant differences between strongly urbanized areas and the prevailing rural areas. Insufficient and uneven distribution of broadband internet access has resulted in the digital gap. The creation of conditions for a balanced development of broadband internet access is a national interest for the Republic of Croatia. In order to speed up that process, Croatian Regulatory Authority for Network Industries (HAKOM), together with some Croatian universities, started in 2010 the multidisciplinary research project "Looking to the future". The project has been aimed at preparing stake holders in the electronic communications market for challenges to be encountered in this market in the near future. In parallel, HAKOM executed a new project of state aid for the development of Broadband Internet in the rural areas. More than 13 million € were spent out in last five years for the development of infrastructure, the purchase of terminal equipment and the development of end-user services and applications.

Croatia completed switching-over process for terrestrial digital broadcasting of television by the end of 2010 thus creating preconditions for availability of the digital dividend. A new strategy for switching-over process to DVB-T2 is undergoing and completion of the process is expected by the year 2020 as latest. The objective is to prepare a proposal for an efficient use of the free radiofrequency spectrum for the provision of new services based on broadband internet access and high transmission data rates. Regulatory strategy is to optimise usage and benefits of

radiofrequency spectrum by developing and implementing flexible, market-oriented spectrum regulation policies that promote highly efficient use of spectrum in a way that simulate innovation, investment, job creation and increased end-user benefits. One of the results of such regulatory policy in Croatia so far are thousands of LTE base stations in operation in all three mobile networks in Croatia thus providing high quality services to almost 80 % of Croatian end-users that uses mobile broadband, not only in urban but also in rural areas.

This result is fully in line with the statements of Director ITU-R, Mr. Francois Rancy, given in his introductory speech to this session.

Dr Dražen Lučić