

UN ECE WP6 Telecom Task Force [TTF] Status report as of 30 September 2005

Introduction

UNECE WP.6 Telecom Task Force activity was launched, some basic documents (Common Regulatory Objectives (CROs) proposing the implementation of the UNECE Recommendation "L" to most common information and communication technology (ICT) consumer products are now available, the most important working tools are operative and contacts to enlarge the base of support of the Telecom Task Force (TTF) are initiated.

Chairmanship of the Telecom Task Force (TTF)

The chairman of TTF, due to organizational changes in his administration, can unfortunately not offer further support to this group. Nevertheless a soft transition to the future organization will be supported to ensure the best possible benefits to be taken from the work produced.

Somehow the launching cycle of TTF is about to close and changing the chairmanship should be seen as a challenge for the future and therefore the possibility for covering aspects that could not have been covered in the initial phase.

Members are invited to evaluate the situation and carefully prepare the decisions to be taken.

Present status, summary

1. The TTF web site is available (http://www.unece.org/trade/ctied/wp6/index_wp6.htm) and no relevant changes were recently introduced.
 - a. Members are invited to use this tool and send remarks to the Secretariat or the mailing list
2. All e-mail WTO contact points (WTO-CP) were invited to identify their Telecom contacts and three groups of countries were defined:
 - a. Countries already EU compatible (yellow list),
 - b. 1st group of countries out of EU circle (green list)
 - c. 2nd group of countries out of EU circle (blue list)
 - d. Some of the WTO-CP indicated already expert representatives in the Telecom area
3. The mailing list is now wp6-telecom@unece.org (no longer wp6telecom_initiative@unece.org)
 - a. 79 persons are in the mailing-list after good filtering and updating
 - b. The members are mainly from EU and Eastern Europe/CIS
 - c. A number of experts identified by WTO-CP will be soon integrated in the list

4. Agreement EU-CIS is in the process of ratification, we hope Telecom to be considered 1st prior
 - a. The Secretariat keeps contact with Russia and the leading country (BY, White Russia)
 - b. The translation of the Harmonized Standards [HS] (the Standards formally having a regulatory impact in the EU regime for the Radio and Telecommunications Terminal Equipment) is not necessary in EU countries. All HS are published in English. Only the titles are translated to all the official languages in the EU and this causes already some delays and difficulties.
 - c. The necessary translations to the Russian language (the most common in Eastern Europe) are not yet organized and need to be organized soon in parallel to the EU progress
 - d. The Secretariat is underlining the need to include ICT/ Telecom sector to be in the 1st priority when implementing the agreements
 - e. All the relevant participants in this process will be invited by the Secretariat to be members of TTF mailing list

5. A priority level should be assigned to the treatment of other agreements
 - a. Members are invited to suggest priority levels
 - b. Invitations to the mailing list should be made

6. Clarify the role of MLA/ MRA and the possibilities of implementing CROs or other horizontal agreements with common management tools will facilitate further development
 - a. Do all MRA/ MLA provide regulatory convergence?
 - b. Reference to CROs could be included in MLA/ MRA and agreements in general
 - c. The CROs could be recognized as a pragmatic step helping earlier convergence
 - d. In case of adoption of the R&TTE directive, CROs could be used in the transition period

7. How to develop further synergies with WTO or other relevant organizations?
 - a. Having joint meetings WTO-UNECE for Telecom, how?
 - b. Assist with high level WTO-UNECE contacts
 - c. Study other organizations, other possibilities

8. How to proceed to chairman's replacement and the future of TTF
 - a. UN ECE WP6 officials are studying the best solution to provide a soft transition from the past initial phase to the further steps of TTF
 - b. In the initial phase some results were obtained:
 - i. Support and launch of the TTF
 - ii. Endorsement of the initial draft texts of CROs covering the most relevant consumer products in the ICT sector
 - iii. Establishment of essential working tools (web and mailing list) to facilitate remote participation and permanent progress of the work
 - c. Also in the initial phase some particular situations were identified:
 - i. The majority of the UN ECE WP6 members, due to the enlargement of the EU and an increasing number of countries adopting EU regulation, are in the practice already applying the CRO principles, since they are compatible and very similar to EU regulatory base
 - ii. The adoption of the prepared CROs and the participation in the TTF was nevertheless considered very useful for all the experts as a tool to facilitate a common understanding and application of the regulating principles and of the formal documents
 - iii. An extension of the supporting base for the TTF is being prepared using WTO contact points

- iv. The progress of the extension activity has to be stimulated and supervised
- v. New contacts from not yet represented countries need to be included
- vi. The mailing list need to be more used to exchange experience and intensify progress
- vii. Some possibilities like regular joint meetings and other synergies with most relevant organizations pursuing common goals need to be better studied

9. Other suggestions

- a. Members are invited to make remarks

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