ETSI World Class Standards

Sophia Antipolis
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Dear Commissioner Gabriel,

Thank you for your letter dated 5 December 2017 and for the opportunity you afford me to address your concerns.

The timeline for the delivery of 5G standards was the result of a 3GPP consultative workshop, held in Phoenix, USA, during September 2015. More than 550 experts participated in that workshop, including representatives from industry, government, regulators, research and academia. Given the size and complexity of the proposed 5G work plan it was concluded that there should be a phased approach to standards delivery, the expectation being that a first phase of 5G standards would be delivered by mid-2018, with a second phase being delivered by the end of 2019. It was also determined that the resulting 5G standards need to address three major use case families namely: enhanced mobile broadband; massive machine type communications; and ultra-reliable low latency communications. The intention of supporting these three use case families was to ensure that new industry sectors might leverage these results, including for example automotive, health, energy and manufacturing. Furthermore, one of the main goals of the first phase of 5G was to design a forward compatible system paving the way for the use of these results by additional industry sectors.

Reflecting today on the progress that 3GPP has made since that consultative workshop, it can be noted that standards depicting the new 5G radio interface have indeed been delivered ahead of schedule (December 2017). This was in response to an urgent plea from certain participants that observed a market opportunity that they wished to satisfy. This acceleration of standards delivery was achievable only because significant resources have been committed to the task in hand and, indeed, 3GPP has considered approximately 100 000 meeting contributions in 2017, during 75 000 delegate-days of meetings. 3GPP will continue its efforts to develop a full standalone system by mid-2018 which will enable one of the key use cases, namely ultra-reliable low latency communications, in addition to enhanced mobile broadband. At this point in time it is expected that 3GPP will deliver the remainder of the 5G standards package in accordance with the initial timeline (Phase 1 by mid-2018 and Phase 2 by end 2019).

With regards to the content of the emerging standards, and as indicated above, I would beg to differ with your view that 3GPP is focussed primarily on improving data-rate capabilities. A clearly defined set of minimum performance requirements has been established by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) as part of their IMT-2020 activity and 3GPP is committed to meet, and in many cases

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exceed, those minimum requirements. This is indeed a prerequisite for 3GPP results to be included within the IMT-2020 framework of standards. These minimum requirements go far beyond data-rates and include such parameters as latency, connection density, reliability, spectral and energy efficiency. In addition, 3GPP will standardize a new 5G system architecture which offers features such as network slicing, interworking with non-3GPP access technologies (e.g., Wi-Fi), network exposure functionality and evolved, more flexible, security mechanisms. This will lay the foundation for easier access to the 3GPP system from a wide range of industry sectors. In this context, work is already in progress on standards for V2X (Vehicle-to-Everything), industrial applications/use cases, IoT (Internet of Things) and efficient video/media distribution. In conclusion, there are many market opportunities beyond mobile broadband, and 3GPP intends to deliver a set of standards that satisfy those market needs.

Standardization is, by its very nature, voluntary and contribution driven. When embarking on an activity such as 5G it is inevitable that different priorities will be expressed by different regions and industry sectors. It is evident then that when priorities are discussed within 3GPP, it is the consensus view of participants in the standardization effort that will prevail. This should however be viewed positively, because it is futile to write standards unless there is an industry that is ready to deploy them in reply to market demands. Indeed, it has always been an aspiration among standards bodies to develop standards that match market needs as closely as possible. The 587 member companies, administrations, academia and institutes from 43 different countries that participate in 3GPP do so with that ambition in mind.

ETSI is the European partner in 3GPP, and in my other capacity as the ETSI Director-General I remain at your disposal to meet with you and your staff personally to explain further the development of 5G standards and to address any points which may still remain outstanding.

Yours sincerely,

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