Commission européenne

Mariya Gabriel
Commissaire à
l'économie et à la société numériques

Brussels, 05 12 17
ju-ca-04-2 (2017)

Dear Mr. Romero,

I write to you in your capacity as Chairman of the 3GPP Project Coordination Group to raise a number of concerns regarding the project's agenda towards global 5G standards. These are also relevant for the main European market actors currently active in 3GPP. For this reason I am addressing a copy of this letter to the 5G Infrastructure Association, GSMA Europe and Digital Europe.

As you know the European Commission has identified 5G as a policy priority for Europe. It has the potential to be a fundamental enabler for the digital transformation of our economy and society.

The 5G Action Plan[1] adopted by the Commission in September last year as part of the "Connectivity package" underlines the strategic importance of rapid progress in technology, deployment and take-up of 5G communication services. Furthermore, the European Parliament endorsed[2] the 5G Action Plan, calling for efforts on standardisation to be stepped up with a view to ensuring that Europe plays a leading role in setting technology standards allowing for the deployment of 5G networks and services.

In July of this year, in the Ministerial Declaration of Tallinn[3], EU Member States emphasised the need for 5G global interoperability in order to make 5G a success for Europe. Global standards are of paramount importance to ensure the competitiveness and interoperability of telecommunication networks. To this end, Member States underlined the need for a comprehensive and inclusive approach to 5G standardisation as a priority for the Digital Single Market.

3rd Generation Partnership Project, Project Coordination Group
Mr Luis Jorge Romero (Chairman) luis.romero@etsi.org

cc: Mr Adrian Scrase (Secretary) adrian.scrase@etsi.org
Mr Jean-Pierre Bienaimé (Secretary General - 5G Infrastructure Association) jeanpierre.bienaime@5g-ppp.eu
Ms Afke Schaart (VP and Head - GSMA Europe) aschaart@gsma.com
Mr Markus Borchert (President - Digital Europe) markus.borchert@nokia.com

---

[1] COM(2016) 588
[2] ITRE report on "internet connectivity for growth, competitiveness and cohesion: European gigabit society and 5G"; (2016/2305(INI)), Rapporteur: Michał Boni
[3] Ministerial Declaration "Making 5G a success for Europe" signed during the informal meeting of competitiveness and telecommunications ministers on 18 July in Tallinn

Rue de la Loi/Wetstraat 200
B - 1049 Bruxelles - Office: BERL 09/024
Tél.: +32-2-295.59.60
E-mail: mariya.gabriel@ec.europa.eu

In this context, we are monitoring and supporting the standardisation process in 3GPP very closely. The 5G Public-Private-Partnership (5G PPP) - with an EU public contribution of €700 million between 2015 and 2022 - is an important driver for standardisation with so far some 300 industry contributions to 3GPP related to these activities.

As you know, the Commission is also taking steps to support the organisation of 3GPP meetings in Europe in order to facilitate the active participation of a broad range of European delegates, from key industrial players but also SMEs, academia and research institutions.

Rapid progress is needed in 5G standardisation to meet the deployment targets set and to address the 5G use cases. The 3GPP priorities currently seem primarily focused on developments in 5G that merely enhance further data-rate capabilities as compared to 4G systems. Some of the technologies already selected appear to be based on conservative approaches rather than on technological excellence and innovation. We recognise the importance of early versions of 5G standards with a view to swift market introduction. However, specific requirements should also be addressed as priority to foresee the evolution of the standards towards the needed service capabilities. We thus call for efforts on 5G standardisation to be stepped up in order to accelerate the development of 5G standards for all relevant use cases.

Indeed, there is a strategic opportunity for market actors to invest in digital use cases for economic sectors such as smart cities, e-health, intelligent transport, education or entertainment and media. In order to ensure their successful implementation, priority attention is in particular needed for ultra-reliable low latency, connectivity of millions of devices per square kilometre, or enabling multi-tenant control of network resources. We thus call for a clear interoperability strategy for 5G standards taking into account the vertical markets aspects.

It is therefore of paramount importance that actors are fully committed to swift adoption of early 5G standards, while addressing specific 5G requirements for relevant use cases in more advanced 5G standards.

We need a 5G solution that empowers our economic sectors. I therefore urge the standardisation bodies and the concerned industrial actors to step-up their efforts for the rapid development of 5G standards addressing more immediate market needs while driving a clear strategy for a 5G global standard bringing benefits to a wide range of industrial use cases.

Yours sincerely,

Mariya Gabriel