

THE OFFICE OF ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS ACTIONS TOWARDS IMPROVEMENT OF THE
QUALITY OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES TO MEET CONSUMER NEEDS

Regulators should be pro-active and take proper actions in the area of consumer protection. The consumer protection is closely related to the quality of services delivered by operators and service providers. Consumers await affordable, equitable and nondiscriminatory access to services as they are not usually treated in a fair manner and the quality of services provided is depreciated to low standards. Recognizing consumers needs the President of UKE took actions and proposed soft-regulation approach toward improvement of the quality of services.

In October 2013, at the initiative of the President of UKE Magdalena Gaj, a Memorandum on cooperation aimed at improving the quality of services available in the telecommunications market was signed. In addition to the President of UKE, the memorandum was signed by 44 entities - undertakings operating in the telecommunications market, representatives of chambers of commerce, and academic institutions.

The President of the Office of Electronic Communications and the other signatories to the Memorandum intend to work together to achieve the following objectives: ensuring clear and transparent contractual terms, publication of comparable information on the indicators referring to the availability and quality of services as well as introduction of minimum requirements for the quality of service (QoS).

Providing consumers with the highest quality of telecommunications services and reliable information about the parameters of these services is one of the most important tasks of the President of the Office of Electronic Communications. Polish solution in this area, consisting in co-regulation of the market will bring many benefits to both consumers and the signatories of the Memorandum

This initiative has met with significant interest from both the scientific community and the operators, representatives of industry associations and chambers. All of them have been very actively involved in the process of consultation of the draft memorandum.

Scope of joint activities

By entering into the Memorandum on the quality of service, the Signatories decided to carry out joint actions aimed at:

- improving the quality of telecommunications services;
- providing users of public telecommunications networks with access to sound, reliable, comparable, timely and fully understood by each consumer information on the quality of telecommunications services;
- increasing user awareness of the technical possibilities and limitations in the provision of telecommunications services;
- unifying the requirements for quality of service and providing clear and understandable rules of the telecommunications market;
- providing clear and transparent information on the conditions of service;
- improving consumers' awareness of their rights under the existing regulations on pricing and requirements concerning the quality of telecommunications services;
- creating by the Initiator - the Office of Electronic Communications - a regulatory environment friendly to the telecommunications business that promotes the possibility of co-regulating the telecommunications market.

Quality of service indicators

The next stage of cooperation was to establish the Working Group composed of representatives of the Signatories to the Memorandum, whose task was to develop a list of quality of service indicators and

commonly agreed methodologies for their measurement and calculation, in order to provide consumers with access to complete and comparable information on the quality of telecommunications services.

The list of proposed quality of service indicators includes: waiting time for connection to the public telecommunications network, waiting time for connection with the operator's helpline, time of removal of damage or failure, the rate of complaints about the correctness of invoices and supplementation of pre-paid amounts.

Indicators for telephony are complemented by: the rate of unsuccessful calls and call set-up time. In addition, for Internet services the following parameters are offered: data transmission error rate, data transmission speed achieved in both directions, and transmission delay (transmission time in one direction).

The Memorandum is an initiative open to all

The Memorandum on cooperation aimed at improving the quality of services available in the telecommunications market is an open initiative. The Office of Electronic Communications encourages all those who take care of improving the quality of services available on the Polish telecommunications market to join in the actions.

In order to meet consumers needs on the one hand, and harmlessly address inappropriate practices of the operators and service providers on the other, NRAs should be pro-active and try to reconcile consumers and market entities interests. Regulators should take proper actions appropriate to the circumstances.