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|  | **Document EG-ITRs-4/9** |
| **24 February 2025** |
| **English only** |
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| Chair, EG-ITRs |
| REPORT OF THE FOURTH MEETING OF THE EXPERT GROUP ON THE INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION REGULATIONS (EG-ITRs) – 2023-2026  |

# 1 Introduction

**1.1** The fourth meeting of theExpert Group on the International Telecommunication Regulations (EG-ITRs), 2023-2026, was held on 20-21 February 2025.

**1.2** On behalf of the Secretary-General, Ms Doreen Bogdan-Martin, the Director of the Telecommunication Standardisation Bureau (TSB), Mr Seizo Onoe, welcomed the participants to the fourth meeting of EG-ITRs (2023-2026). He commended the members on their support and commitment to the work of the Group and urged them to continue working together with the spirit of consensus and collaboration.

**1.3** The Chair thanked the TSB Director for his presence and support for the meeting and stressed the importance of constructively considering the proposals presented to the Group and using this meeting productively and efficiently to agree on a way forward with respect to the structure of the Final Report of the Group to Council 2026.

# 2 Adoption of the Agenda and allocation of documents

The Agenda (Doc. [EG-ITRs-4/1(Rev.1)](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-EGITRS4-C-0001/en)) was presented by the Chair. The Agenda was adopted.

# 3 Introduction/discussion of general contributions from Member States and Sector Members

The EG-ITRs examined the various contributions (in the order listed in the agenda), which were noted by the Group. The summaries of the contributions (as submitted by the authors of the documents,) along with the corresponding discussions, are provided below.

## 3.1 Contribution [EG-ITRs-4/2](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-EGITRS4-C-0002/en), Hill

### 3.1.1 Summary of contribution

Some contributions have stated that operators do not use the ITRs. Indeed most operators do not explicitly refer to the ITRs in their commercial contracts, however they rely on the ITRs in order to avoid having to use the accounting rate system. Transparency would be improved if all Member States could agree to the provisions of Article 8 of the 2012 ITRs.

### 3.1.2 Discussion

a) Some members expressed support for the proposal stating that agreement by the Group in this respect would help improve transparency as operators rely on this article and it is important for their work, highlighting that contributions in previous meetings have demonstrated how operators in several regions are facing problems when engaging with countries that do use the 1988 ITRs. Some other members were of the view that no examples have been submitted where the existence of two treaties presented any obstacle or problems for the electronic telecommunication industry, and that the current situation is transparent enough due to easy availability of both treaties to everyone.

b) Some members were of the view that there is agreement in the meeting that the concept of special arrangements is important to everyone and, unlike previous meetings, where discussions were had over whether the ITRs are used or applicable or relevant to the issues that exist in the telecommunications sector today, this discussion has demonstrated that the ITRs remain relevant and need to be updated to address current issues. Some members reiterated that transparency is sufficient in the current situation, with operators having access to both versions of the treaty and are experiencing no issues in this respect. These members further noted than any revisions to the ITRs are outside the mandate of this Group.

c) A member requested that the following sections of the contribution be reflected in the report as they are a statement of fact:

– 12 However, not all ITU Member States have adopted the 2012 ITRs.

– 13 So, the Member States that have not adopted the 2012 ITRs do rely on the Special Arrangements provision (Article 9 of the 1988 ITRs) in order to avoid having to impose the accounting rate system on certain operators (recognized private operating agencies).

– 14 Thus, some operators in those Members States implicitly use the 1988 ITRs in order to avoid having to use the accounting rate system.

d) The Chair noted that, despite the lack of consensus on this contribution, it is not disputed that special arrangements are an element. The contribution was noted.

## 3.2 Contribution [EG-ITRs-4/6](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-EGITRS4-C-0006/en), Hill

### 3.2.1 Summary

In light of the progress made, it is proposed to modify the agreed work plan to move the preparation of the final report forward by one meeting.

### 3.2.2 Discussion

a) Members supported the proposal to begin deliberating on the Final Report of this Group to Council 2026 at this meeting to provide sufficient time for members to discuss and agree on its structure and content but suggested that the Work Plan continue to retain the 6th meeting of the Group at this stage. Depending on progress on the report by the 5th meeting, a decision could be made then whether the 6th meeting is required or not.

b) The contribution was noted.

## 3.3 Contribution [EG-ITRs-4/7](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-EGITRS4-C-0007/en), Hill

### 3.3.1 Summary

A review of the archive webcast of the third meeting suggests that it may be possible to reach consensus on a specific item, namely without prejudice to the question of whether or not the ITRs should or should not be revised, in principle, the ITRs should focus on Member States not private parties and references to private recognized operating agencies, recognized operating agencies, and authorized operating agencies are not needed in light of Article 6 of the Constitution

### 3.3.2 Discussion

a) Some members expressed support for this contribution which also reflects discussions of the Group at previous meetings. Some members expressed appreciation for the contribution but suggested that it may not be judicious to reach this conclusion at this stage until agreement on the substantive content of the treaty is reached. Some members did not support this contribution and were of the view that there is no issue with the current status quo of the ITRs. Some members noted that the thrust of the contribution is that references to private parties are not needed in the ITRs because the matter is covered by the Constitution. Some members noted that the terminology of 1988 ITRs and 2012 ITRs are not aligned with the Constitution.

b) The contribution was noted.

# 4 Introduction/discussion of contributions from Member States and Sector Members on the Final Report

The EG-ITRs examined the various contributions (in the order listed in the agenda), which were noted by the Group. The summaries of the contributions (as submitted by the authors of the documents), along with the corresponding discussions, are provided below.

## 4.1 Contribution [EG-ITRs-4/3](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-EGITRS4-C-0003/en), Hill

### 4.1.1 Summary

This contribution proposes a structure for the final report to the Council of the EG-ITRs. The structure proposed below is based on the structure of Document [C22/26](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0026/en), which is the final report of the previous EG-ITRs. The proposal below is an expansion of the structure set forth in Document [EG-ITRs-3/DL/1](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-EGITRS3-240930-DL-0001/en) and takes into account previous contributions on the structure and format of the final report of the group.

### 4.1.2 Discussion

a) Some members expressed support for the approach adopted in this proposal as it presents a helpful structure for Council and PP-26 to understand the full scope of discussions at the meetings of this Group. Some members were of the view that the structure of the Final Report of this Group should closely align with the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the Group and highlighted that alternate proposals have also been submitted in this respect for the consideration of the members.

b) The contribution was noted.

## 4.2 Contribution [EG-ITRs-4/4](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-EGITRS4-C-0004/en), Hill

### 4.2.1 Summary

This contribution presents items to be included in the final report of the EG-ITRs. The items are presented as entries in the proposed Annex 1 of the proposed structure for the final report presented in EG-ITRs-4/3: Proposal for the structure of the final report. The items are those set forth in contribution [[EG-ITRs 3/2](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-EGITRS3-C-0002/en)](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-EGITRS1-C-0002/en) and its annexes.

**4.2.2 Discussion**

a) Some members were of the view that the annex is useful to convey a full scope of the discussions of the Group and identify the key issues and gaps. These members suggested that a disclaimer could also be added to the annex stating that during discussions, contributions were received on article-by-article reviews of the ITRs and have been reproduced in the Final Report in case helpful. Some members were of the view that the discussions of the Group are best expressed through a summary presented within the Final Report, noting also that not all of the deliberations lend themselves to an article-wise analysis. These members were of the view that a provision-by-provision analysis has already been done by previous Expert Groups, and such analysis is not part of the ToR of this Group. Some other members were of the view that the Group’s ToR do not prevent it from performing such an analysis.

b) The contribution was noted.

## 4.3 Contribution [EG-ITRs-4/5](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-EGITRS4-C-0005/en), Hill

### 4.3.1 Summary

In order to ensure that all inputs are reflected in the Final Report of the EG-ITRs, it would appear to be judicious to start making a list of the inputs that should be reflected. This contribution presents items for inclusion in such a list.

**4.3.2 Discussion**

a) Some members supported the proposed approach for the inclusion of items in the Final Report of the Group to Council 2026, suggesting that members can add or edit this proposal as necessary. Some members suggested that a balanced approach must be adopted when drafting the Final Report which takes into account all the perspectives exchanged by members, including the empirical data previously shared with the Group.

b) The contribution was noted.

## 4.4 Multi-country contribution [EG-ITRs-4/8](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-EGITRS4-C-0008/en), Bulgaria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Germany, Lithuania, Netherlands, Sweden, United Kingdom

### 4.4.1 Summary

Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom thank the Chair of the Expert Group, participants and the TSB for their work on the review of the ITRs. This contribution sets out proposals for the content and structure of the final report that will be submitted to the Council 2026 in line with Annex 1 of Council Resolution 1379 (Mod. 2023).

**4.4.2 Discussion**

a) Some members expressed support for this contribution stating that it aligns with the ToR of the Group as well as past precedents of the final reports of previous expert groups. Some members were of the opinion that there is alignment between this proposal and the proposal set out in contribution 4, with the exception of the annex presented in the latter. Some members suggested that the ToR of this Group include the phrase “among others” in the context of the review to be done by the Group and that this should be reflected in the content of the Final Report as well.

b) Some members suggested that the Final Report reflect all inputs submitted in writing and verbally. Some members noted that overall observations on the ITRs is an important part of the Final Report which should be included. Some members noted that overall observations had been addressed in the 2022 report and that the ToR instructed the Group to make use of the work of the previous group.

c) With respect to the annex, some members were of the opinion that it is an important part of the analysis that the Group has done and the previous group’s detailed analysis does not preclude this Group from also engaging in this work. Some members highlighted that a balanced summary of views highlighting the new items discussed by the Group is sufficient for the purpose of the Final Report of this group and that they would prefer to avoid duplication of work previously done.

d) Some members suggested that the ToR specifically mandate this Group to take into account the work of previous groups and, therefore, the annex would be useful to present the work of the previous group along with indicating the new matters discussed within this Group. Some members suggested including links to the work of previous groups in the Final Report and that there is no need to preproduce the annex for this purpose.

e) It was agreed to hold informal discussions to come to a consensus based on contributions 4 and 8 on a structure and outline of the Final Report (see section 5 below).

# 5 Discussion on next steps

## 5.1 Outline of the Final Report

**5.1.1** The Chair proposed informal discussions to work on a structure and outline of the Final Report of this Group to Council 2026. The output from this discussion was set out in Document EG-ITRs-4/DL/1 and presented to the meeting for consideration.

**5.1.2** During the review of the Outline, members discussed the inclusion of an annex in the Final Report. Some members were of the opinion that further study is needed to understand if an annex containing a detailed analysis is necessary for the purpose of the Final Report. Some members were of the opinion that such an annex and detailed table are important to convey the scope of the discussions and review by the Group. Some members were of the opinion that such an annex and detailed table is not necessary as the Final Report should align with the EG-ITRs ToR and provide a balanced summary of the views exchanged during the discussions of the Group.

**5.1.3** The meeting agreed to the outline of the Final Report as set out in Annex 1 to this meeting report.

**5.1.4** During the review of the meeting report, the Group requested that the Management Team and the Secretariat produce a first draft version of the Final Report at least one month before the next meeting of the EG-ITRs.

## 5.2 Meeting Report

**5.2.1** The Chair presented the draft report of the fourth meeting to the Group for approval. Members considered the meeting report and suggested modifications.

**5.2.2** The draft meeting report was agreed for publication by the Secretariat.

**5.3 Progress Report to Council 2025**

In keeping with past practice, the meeting agreed that the third and fourth meeting reports of the Group, held in September-October 2024 and February 2025 respectively, will be presented and hyperlinked in a short document by the Chair and submitted as a Progress Report to be presented to Council 2025.

# 6 Any other business

6.1 Some members requested that their statements be attached as annexes to this meeting report. These are reflected in Annex 2 and Annex 3.

# 7 Closing of the meeting

In closing, the Chair thanked all the ITU Member States and Sector Members who made contributions and participated in the work of the Expert Group, the Vice-Chairs, and ITU Elected Officials, the Secretariat, the interpreters and the remote moderator for their efficient assistance during the meeting. The meeting thanked the Chair, the Vice Chairs, the Secretariat, the interpreters and the remote moderator for their efficient support.

 Shahira Selim (Egypt)
 Chair

Annex 1

Outline of the Final Report

# 1 Introduction and background

This section should briefly set out the work of the Expert Group, reference the key documents that led to its establishment, detail its Terms of Reference, and provide hyperlinks to the work of the previous groups.

# 2 Activities of the EG-ITRs

This section should link the reports of the six meetings of the EG-ITRs as well as the contributions received for each meeting in the format set out below (in keeping with past precedents).

### 2.1.1 First meeting, 16 October 2023 ([see report](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-EGITRS2-C-0020/en)): At the first meeting, the EG-ITRs Summarize Report

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| Contributions received at the first meeting | – Draft Agenda (Doc. [EG-ITRs-1/1](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-EGITRS1-C-0001/en)): Contribution by the Chair– Overall considerations (Doc. [EG-ITRs-1/2](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-EGITRS1-C-0002/en)): Contribution by Hill– Proposal for working methods and work plan of EG-ITRs (Doc. [EG-ITRs-1/3](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-EGITRS1-C-0003/en)): Contribution by Hill – On the structure of the interim and final reports of the EG-ITRs to the Council on the results of studying issues relating the ITRs, including its consideration, and the work plan of the EG-ITRs for the period of 2024-2026 (Doc. [EG-ITRs-1/4](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-EGITRS1-C-0004/en)): Contribution by Armenia and the Russian Federation– Review of the International Telecommunication Regulations and working methods (Doc. [EG-ITRs-1/5](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-EGITRS1-C-0005/en)): Contribution by Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Romania, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom– Work plan proposal for EG-ITRs (Doc. [EG-ITRs-1/6](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-EGITRS1-C-0006/en)): Contribution by Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Romania, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom– Support to the Revision of the ITRs (Doc. [EG-ITRs-1/7](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-EGITRS1-C-0007/en)): Contribution by Ghana – Proposal for the work of the EG-ITRs (Doc. [EG-ITRs-1/8](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-EGITRS1-C-0008/en)): Contribution by Egypt and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia– Periodic Review of the International Telecommunication Regulation – Discussion on the work plan and ToR of EG‑ITRs, based on PP Res. 146 (Rev. Dubai, 2022) and Council Res. 1379 (Mod. 2023) (Doc. [EG-ITRs-1/9](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-EGITRS1-C-0009/en)): Contribution by China and South Africa.The following contribution was submitted late and was not considered at the first meeting:– Proposal for working methods and work plan of EG-ITRs (Doc. [EG-ITRs-1/10](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-EGITRS1-C-0010/en)): Contribution by Hill |

### 2.1.2 Second meeting, 29-30 January 2024 ([see report](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-EGITRS2-C-0021/en)): At the second meeting, Summarize Report

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| Contributions received at the second meeting | FILL IN |

### 2.1.3 Third meeting, 30 September – 1 October 2024 ([see report](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-EGITRS3-C-0012/en)): At the third meeting, Summarize Report

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| Contributions received at the third meeting | FILL IN  |

### 2.1.4 Fourth meeting, fill in ([see report](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-EGITR4-C-0008/en)): At the fourth meeting, Summarize Report

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| Contributions received at the fourth meeting | FILL IN  |

### 2.1.5 Fifth meeting, fill in ([see report](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-EGITR5-C-0010/en)): At the fifth meeting, Summarize Report

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| Contributions received at the fifth meeting | FILL IN |

### 2.1.6 Sixth meeting, fill in ([see report](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-EGITR5-C-0010/en)): At the sixth meeting, the EG-ITRs discussed and finalized this Report and also approved the Sixth Meeting Report

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| Contributions received at the sixth meeting | FILL IN |

# 3 Summary of views

This section should contain a brief summary reflecting the diversity of the views submitted in writing and verbally with respect to the ToR of EG-ITRs as referred to in section 1 above.

# [4 Overall observations, if any]

# 5 Potential way forward

This section should summarise views on the way forward once the review has been completed.

# 6 Summary of the report

This section should summarise what has been discussed in the report.

[Annex / detailed table]

Annex 2

Hill's statement to the EG-ITRs
20-21 February 2025

6.1 During the discussion of the present report, it was stated that possible ways forward, which could be mentioned in the Final Report, include the following —listed in no particular order:

a) suspend discussions on the ITRs until such time as there is consensus on how to proceed

b) convene another EG-ITRs in order to attempt to find a consensus on how to proceed

c) convene a WCIT, and its preparatory process, in order to revise the ITRs

d) convene a mini-WCIT back-to-back with the WTSA, to abrogate the substance of the ITRs, or, if possible, to abrogate the ITRs entirely.

Annex 3

Canada's statement to the EG-ITRs
20-21 February 2025

Thank you, Chair. I would like to read a statement on behalf of Canada.

First and foremost, we would like to thank you, for your hard work, diligence, patience, and kindness in conducting the proceeding of this Working Group.

It will not come as a surprise if we take this opportunity to reiterate our long-standing views on the ITRs, dating back almost 13 years at the 2012 World Conference on International Telecommunications (WCIT-12).

Canada strongly believed then and continues to believe now, after 13 years and multiple meetings of the EG-ITRs, that the successful deployment and use of telecommunication services and applications worldwide, as reflected and evidenced in several international telecommunication reports and publications, including those of the ITU, has not been the result of the ITRs. What has been and will continue to be a successful path for the deployment, adoption and use of telecommunications and ICTs in a rapidly evolving telecommunications sector, is the creation and enhancement of regulatory environments that promote competition, investment, transparency, entrepreneurship and innovation. Canada also believes that public-private partnerships (PPPs) have proven to be very effective in the design and successful implementation of national and regional telecommunication and ICT development strategies.

Canada looks forward to continuing working with all ITU membership and stakeholders to ensure that the focus of our collective work and the proper use of our human and financial resources remain on closing the digital divide to connect the unconnected and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Thank you.

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