

Regional Regulatory Associations (RA) / Digital Regulation Network (DRN) meeting

MONDAY 1 SEPTEMBER 2025

REPORT BY THE CHAIR



The 2025 annual Regional Regulatory Associations (RAs) meeting was chaired by Eng. Omar Abdulrahman Alrejraje, Deputy Governor of the Regulation and Competition Sector, Communication, Space and Technology (CST), Representative of AREGNET. This year the meeting counted with the active participation of 12 Regional Regulatory Associations.

The Regional Regulatory Associations / Digital Regulation Network (DRN) Meeting convened Heads of regulatory associations to exchange experiences and practical insights. The DRN initiative aims to accelerate sustainable digital transformation by fostering common approaches to collaborative digital policy, regulation, and governance across sectors and borders.

Discussions covered core regulatory themes – universal broadband access, competition, and cybersecurity, alongside emerging tools and strategies to spur innovation. A central focus was advancing common regional approaches to complex cross-border issues, notably artificial intelligence, satellite-based communications, and data protection, highlighting the need for interoperable frameworks and coordinated action.

In his opening remarks, Eng. Alrejraje expressed sincere gratitude to the BDT Director for his vision and leadership in creating the Digital Regulation Network (DRN). This initiative has given us a powerful platform to share knowledge, align strategies, and work collectively toward a digital transformation that benefits everyone. Under his guidance, the DRN has become more than a network—it is a catalyst for innovation, collaboration, and sustainable impact across regions and sectors.

Dr Cosmas Zavazava, BDT Director, expressed gratitude to Eng. Alrejraje for chairing the Regional Regulatory Associations/DRN Meeting as representative of AREGNET, and thanked all participating Regional Regulatory Associations representatives. He emphasized the importance of regional collaboration and highlighted the DRN initiative -launched at GSR-23 - as a key driver of sustainable digital transformation. The BDT Director concluded by affirming the power of shared vision and collaboration to create inclusive technological progress, and reminded the essential role that the Board members play as ambassadors of the DRN, encouraging them to act as representatives who advocate for DRN initiatives and promote regulatory cooperation.

The RA Chair then moved to the interactive discussion on the activities and priorities of Regional Regulatory Associations and how RAs can contribute to DRN implementation. The following Regulatory Associations then intervened, a summary of their intervention is available on the Annex of this report.

1. Association of Communications and Telecommunications Regulators of the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (ARCTEL-CPLP)
2. Assembly of Telecommunications Regulators of Central Africa (ARTAC)
3. Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC)
4. Communications Regulators Association of Southern Africa (CRASA)
5. East African Communications Organization (EACO)
6. Eastern Caribbean Telecommunications Authority (ECTEL)
7. Eastern Partnership Electronic Communications Regulators Network (EaPeReg)
8. Euro Mediterranean Telecom Regulators (EMERG)
9. Francophone Network of Telecommunications Regulators (FRATEL)
10. Latin American Forum of Telecommunications Regulators (REGULATEL)
11. Organization Of Caribbean Utility Regulators (OOCUR)
12. West Africa Telecommunications Regulators Assembly (WATRA)

Regional Regulatory Associations highlighted the value and growing impact of the DRN initiative, recognizing its success in strengthening regional collaboration. They reaffirmed their commitment to supporting the DRN as a strategic tool for enhancing cooperation among members. The RAs also stressed the urgency of sharing best practices at both regional and interregional levels, organizing knowledge-exchange platforms, and continuing to circulate relevant ITU materials and resources. These actions, they noted, are essential to accelerating the adoption of emerging technologies through collaborative regulatory approaches across sectors, countries, and regions.

In concluding, the Chair expressed his deep thanks to all the Regional Regulatory Associations for sharing their priorities, experiences and activities. He emphasized the importance of continued dialogue to share experiences, reiterating the DRN's role as a dynamic platform for collaboration among regulators at international, inter-regional, and inter-governmental levels.

Annex: Summary of Regional Regulatory Associations' priorities and activities 2025

1. Arab Regulators Network of Telecommunications and Information Technologies (AREGNET)

Key Priorities and Activities:

AI for Regulatory Drafting

- Launching use cases where artificial intelligence is being applied to draft regulations.

AI for Regulatory Review

- Applying AI advisory tools to review existing regulations, identify gaps, and support regulatory improvements.

Regulation as Code

- Introducing initiatives to transform regulation into machine-readable code.
- Enabling use of regulation-as-code by service providers and AI systems for implementation and compliance.

2. Association of Communications and Telecommunications Regulators of the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (ARCTEL-CPLP)

Key Priorities and Activities:

Promotion of Gender Equality and Digital Inclusion

- Focus on closing the digital divide, particularly through girls' education.
- Creation of job opportunities for women.
- Partnerships with stakeholders to support community development and key sectors across CPLP countries.

Early Warning System in Cabo Verde (with ITU support)

- Enhance national emergency response capacity through telecommunications.
- Plan to replicate and share this model with other CPLP countries.

SV4D – Sustainable Village for Development

- Promote digital inclusion in rural areas through innovative technology solutions.
- Originated during the pandemic and now integrated into Cabo Verde's National Digital Transformation Strategy, with ARCTEL's support.

Digital Agenda for CPLP

- Originally launched in 2012, now being updated to reflect current digital realities.

3. Assembly of Telecommunications Regulators of Central Africa (ARTAC)

Strategic Framework - Implementation of a three-year strategic plan with three main pillars:

- Harmonized and resilient regulation.
- Digital inclusion through the expansion and use of digital technologies.
- Organizational governance to strengthen cooperation among members.
- The strategic plan provides a clear roadmap to address current and future needs, positioning regulators as key actors in building robust and inclusive digital infrastructure.

Key Projects and Initiatives:

Free Roaming Project (CEMAC region)

- Implemented with support from the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC).
- Aims to create harmonized regulation and eventually establish a single network among member states.

Regional and National Infrastructure Governance Project

- Carried out with support from the European Union.
- Includes the creation of a Regional Observatory for Central Africa on telecommunications.
- The observatory will facilitate data and information sharing among Central African countries.

Capacity Building and Cooperation

- Organization of multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms.
- Promotion of experience-sharing among regional regulators.
- Strengthening of partnerships for resource-sharing and joint initiatives.

Regulatory Framework Development

- Drafting of common regulatory frameworks and policies.
- Contribution to guidelines and standards for the region.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adaptive Regulation

- Establishment of a monitoring and evaluation system to ensure regulations remain dynamic and responsive.
- Adjustments made in line with market feedback and technological evolution.

4. Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC)

Strategic Focus – Advancing regulatory cooperation to support EU digital priorities

- Strengthening regional coordination among National Regulatory Authorities across EU, candidate, and third countries.
- Serving as an independent advisory body to the European Commission.

Key Priorities and Activities:

Roaming Regulation

- Continuing to support the “Roam Like at Home” policy as a core example of cross-border regulatory success.
- Highlighting its role in transforming mobile communication and travel within the region.

Net Neutrality

- Reinforcing commitment to maintaining open internet access.
- Sharing best practices among NRAs to ensure consistency and adaptability.

Copper Switch-Off Guidelines

- Developing and promoting guidance to accelerate the transition from copper to fiber networks.
- Supporting the achievement of EU 2030 digital goals, including gigabit connectivity and reduced carbon emissions.

Network Resilience

- Identifying gaps in mobile network stability exposed during recent natural disasters, including floods in Slovenia and Austria.

- Prioritizing improved infrastructure to ensure continuity of mission-critical services, such as public warning systems, during emergencies.

Digital Networks Act Preparedness

- Engaging with the European Commission's forthcoming Digital Networks Act.
- Anticipating new regulatory challenges and contributing best practices to shape the legislative update.

Knowledge Sharing and Regional Cooperation

- Facilitating experience exchange and joint initiatives across European and neighboring regulators.
- Promoting collective learning through active participation in the Digital Regulation Network (DRN).

5. Communications Regulators Association of Southern Africa (CRASA)

Strategic Focus – Advancing harmonization and digital inclusion across the SADC region

- Bringing together 14 SADC regulators under one platform to align priorities and long-term digital ambitions.
- Driving political will, common dialogue, and peer-to-peer learning to advance inclusive regulation.

Key Priorities and Activities:

Model Regulatory Frameworks

- Facilitating development of model guidelines and frameworks that member states can adapt nationally.
- Developing a model spectrum policy for SADC and the 2024 SADC Radio Frequency Spectrum Allocation Plan.
- Developing frameworks on consumer protection, including agreements for conformity assessment and type approval of ICT certifications.
- Developing model licensing frameworks for non-geostationary satellite orbits (NGSO).
- Developing a model of the national emergency telecommunications plan with ITU support.

Harmonization and Integration

- Reducing regulatory fragmentation and enabling cross-border services.
- Deepening regional market integration through harmonized approaches.
- Promoting harmonization as a multidimensional process requiring political will, vision alignment, and continuous dialogue.

Capacity Building and Peer Learning

- Facilitating continuous training workshops and peer-to-peer learning for regulators.
- Covering emerging issues such as artificial intelligence, consumer protection, and universal access.
- Mobilizing sponsorships and partnerships to strengthen regulatory capacity

Research and Development

- Conducting studies on emerging regulatory issues to support forward-looking policies.
- Developing a framework for 5G adoption across the region.
- Embarking on a cross-border roaming initiative to improve connectivity and regional integration.

Stakeholder Engagement and Partnerships

- Ensuring regional policies are aligned with continental and global frameworks.
- Engaging with ITU for technical and financial support to strengthen regional agendas.

Universal Access and Service Fund (UASF) Guidelines

- Publishing and implementing the Universal Access and Service Fund guideline to provide member states with practical tools to expand connectivity.

Advocacy and Regional Voice

- Working with ITU to amplify regional perspectives in global forums such as GSR.
- Promoting collective learning through active participation in the Digital Regulation Network (DRN).

6. East African Communications Organization (EACO)

Strategic Focus – Guiding ICT sector growth through harmonization of policy, legal, and regulatory frameworks

- Bringing together seven national regulatory authorities and partners in the East African region.
- Driving regional integration through a common strategic plan (2023–2028) focused on digital transformation, inclusivity, affordability, and institutional sustainability.

Key Priorities and Activities:

Model Policies and Regulatory Frameworks

- Coordinating the development of a regional model spectrum policy and the East African Radio Frequency Spectrum Allocation Plan.
- Developing a Child Online Protection Framework to safeguard young users.
- Advancing regional frameworks, including the Regional Broadband Strategy, Regional Economic Strategy, and cross-border communication frameworks.
- Conducting a study on the impact of emerging technologies on regulation, scheduled for completion in early 2026.

Evidence-Based Decision-Making

- Publishing regional ICT statistics to guide regulatory and policy decisions across member states.

Addressing the Usage Gap

- Working with partners such as GSMA and the African Telecommunications Union to bridge the broadband usage gap.
- Hosting workshops and building a regional strategy on how Universal Service Funds (USFs) can address usage challenges.
- Bringing USFs together to develop joint responses and advocating for affordable devices and services for underserved populations.

Regional and International Collaboration

- Continuing to implement Memoranda of Understanding with other regulatory associations.
- Promoting common approaches to digital policy, regulation, and governance through cross-regional cooperation.

Capacity Building and Knowledge Sharing

- Strengthening collaboration under the Digital Regulation Network in areas of knowledge sharing, capacity building, and regional project support.
- Facilitating exchange of expertise and best practices among regulators to promote inclusive digital transformation in the East African region.

7. Eastern Partnership Electronic Communications Regulators Network (EaPeReg)

Strategic Focus – Advancing harmonization and regional cooperation across Eastern Europe and the Caucasus:

- Serving as a platform to align national strategies with EU frameworks and promote regional digital transformation.

Key Priorities and Activities:

Digital Strategies and Harmonization

- Supporting member states in developing and implementing national digital strategies (e.g., Azerbaijan, Armenia, Moldova, Ukraine).
- Harmonizing legislation with EU frameworks and directives, including broadband cost reduction initiatives.

Roaming Initiatives

- Advancing the “Roam Like at Home” project with the aim of extending European roaming arrangements across all EaPeReg members.

Innovation and Experimentation

- Proposing experimentation with regulatory sandboxes to test new approaches.
- Contributing to the development of new regulatory indicators, including G5 indicators.

Cross-Border 5G Cooperation

- Promoting cross-border cooperation for 5G network deployment and spectrum harmonization.
- Addressing challenges in coordinating next-generation spectrum across the region.

Artificial Intelligence Integration

- Exploring the application of AI in regulatory practices.
- Building on recent regional workshops to integrate AI into regulatory frameworks.

Regional Connector Role

- Positioning EaPeReg as a connector between Europe and Asia to strengthen regional integration.
- Sharing diverse experiences across broadcasting, cybersecurity, AI, and electronic communications with other regional regulatory networks.

8. Euro Mediterranean Telecom Regulators (EMERG)

Strategic Focus – Harmonizing regulatory approaches and strengthening cooperation across Europe and the Mediterranean:

- Bringing together 26 regulatory authorities as a trusted platform for dialogue.
- Focusing on capacity building, knowledge sharing, and practical collaboration to advance regional integration.

Key Projects and Initiatives:

Digital Infrastructure and 5G Deployment

- Advancing work on digital infrastructure and next-generation connectivity.
- Coordinating cross-border cooperation on 5G rollout, spectrum, and resilience

Cross-Border Connectivity and Roaming

- Strengthening regional collaboration on cross-border connectivity.

- Supporting members in aligning roaming policies to enable seamless communication across the Mediterranean.

Specialized Working Groups

- Expanding collaboration with the ITU, IPEREC in Eastern Europe, and the wider Semina region.
- Transforming national initiatives into regional best practices aligned with global standards.

Role within the Digital Regulation Network (DRN)

- Acting as a multiplier by translating global DRN objectives into actionable regional initiatives.
- Promoting inclusive digital ecosystems and ensuring smaller or less resourced regulators benefit from shared expertise.
- Bringing the regional voice into global dialogue to align frameworks with practical realities.

9. Francophone Network of Telecommunications Regulators (FRATEL)

Strategic Focus – Promoting exchange of regulatory practices among French-speaking countries across Africa, Europe, and the Americas

- Bringing together regulators with shared legal traditions and frameworks rooted in the French language.
- Providing a complementary network to other regional groups, with a focus on sharing experiences rather than harmonizing regulations.

Key Priorities and Activities:

Experience Sharing and Capacity Building

- Organizing the annual seminar, annual meeting, webinars, and training sessions to promote peer learning.
- Offering a space for open dialogue to exchange regulatory practices and foster innovation.

Addressing New Regulatory Issues

- Addressing emerging challenges such as digital data markets, international connectivity, satellite regulation, and the local impacts of global digital players.
- Developing collective reflections on how to respond to these evolving issues.

Innovative Regulatory Tools

- Advancing “regulation through data” as a new approach for regulators.
- Coordinating working groups on mobile coverage and quality of service monitoring tools that can be applied by FRATEL members.
- Sharing practical and operational tools for more effective regulation.

10. Latin American Forum of Telecommunications Regulators (REGULATEL)

Strategic Focus – Promoting innovation, modernization, and investment through adaptive and inclusive regulation

- Bringing together Spanish-speaking regulators across the Latin American region.
- Supporting public policy as a driver for closing the digital divide and advancing meaningful connectivity.

Key Priorities and Activities:

Regulatory Modernization

- Developing and advancing processes to modernize regulatory frameworks with ITU and BDT support.

- Promoting the transition of member states towards becoming fifth-generation regulators, following the example of the Dominican Republic.

Data-Driven Regulation

- Implementing regulatory approaches based on data and regulatory impact assessments.
- Defining clear objectives for interventions in consultation with digital ecosystem stakeholders.

Sustainable Digital Infrastructure

- Ensuring efficiency of investment and promoting infrastructure sharing.
- Integrating environmental sustainability into digital infrastructure development and public policy.

Data Governance and Emerging Technologies

- Strengthening personal data protection legislation across the region.
- Promoting national strategies on artificial intelligence, aligned with data protection requirements.

Digital Inclusion and Equity

- Promoting initiatives to close the gender digital divide and expand access to digital services.
- Supporting subsidies and measures that enable vulnerable households to benefit from connectivity.

Cybersecurity

- Addressing cybersecurity as a cross-cutting priority alongside digital transformation efforts.

Innovation and International Cooperation

- Advancing regulatory sandboxes with a focus on sustainability and emerging technologies.
- Sharing successful practices and fostering collaboration with other regional networks.

11. Organization Of Caribbean Utility Regulators (OOCUR)

Strategic Focus – Implementing a five-year strategic plan (2024–2029) across 17 multi-sector regulators in the Caribbean

- Strengthening the role of regulators with responsibilities that include ICT
- Building a common approach to regulation in support of regional integration and digital transformation

Key Priorities and Activities:

Universal Connectivity and 5G Deployment

- Focusing on promoting universal high-speed connectivity across the Caribbean.
- Supporting the deployment of 5G and equivalent technologies in member countries.

Digital Regulation and Consumer Protection

- Fostering orderly regulation of the digital transformation process.
- Prioritizing consumer protection and addressing emerging issues in cybersecurity.

Regional Harmonization

- Advancing efforts to create a common ICT space across the region.
- Promoting coordinated regulatory approaches to support regional integration.

Flagship Annual Conference

- Organizing the OOCUR Annual Conference from 26–29 October 2025 in Montego Bay, Jamaica.
- Hosting regional and international stakeholders under the theme “Navigating Caribbean Opportunities for Innovation and Collaboration”.

Contribution to the Digital Regulation Network (DRN)

- Sharing experiences and best practices across regulatory areas.
- Promoting cost-sharing and joint initiatives in training and technology.
- Contributing to institutional strengthening and ensuring a common, united regional voice.

12. West Africa Telecommunications Regulators Assembly (WATRA)

Strategic Focus – Advancing regional digital transformation across 16 national regulatory authorities in West Africa:

- Strengthening regulatory harmonization, fostering connectivity, and building trust.
- Contributing to the Digital Regulation Network as a key platform for coordinated and inclusive digital regulation.

Key Priorities and Activities:

Regulatory Harmonization

- Implementing a regional framework for non-geostationary orbit (NGSO) satellite systems to support adaptation and localization of new technologies.
- Advancing ECOWAS free-roaming agreements, with 13 out of 19 bilateral agreements live and more under development.

Connectivity

- Implementing a broadband infrastructure mapping project in partnership with the ITU, following the 2023 joint declaration.
- Focusing on the first phase of mapping optical fiber networks to identify coverage gaps, guide policy decisions, and drive investment.

Digital Financial Services and Trust

- Strengthening cross-border payment systems and enhancing security for digital financial services.
- Reinforcing consumer confidence through collaboration with ITU on digital financial services security.

Contribution to the Digital Regulation Network (DRN)

- Sharing practical knowledge and best practices, including lessons from NGSO satellite regulation and free-roaming agreements.
- Contributing through working groups on spectrum management, digital inclusion, and consumer protection.
- Providing regional data on coverage and affordability to support the DRN knowledge base.