IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE REPORT

ITU Actions in Europe and Implementation of the

ITU Regional Initiatives for Europe

(January-November 2021)

ITU Office for Europe

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1   Introduction

This document outlines all activities undertaken or to be undertaken by ITU between January and December 2021, as a direct response to the expected results of the ITU Regional Initiatives for Europe Region, consisting of 46 countries. Activities presented in this document depict expected outcomes and generated impact per Regional Initiative as well as per activity. They are grouped in chronological order per Regional Initiative. All activities carried out under the ITU Regional Initiatives for Europe are directly linked to the corresponding BDT Thematic Priorities, strengthening their delivery and impact at the regional and national level. Simultaneously, the outcomes of all activities contribute to the work of the ITU Study Groups, as well as ITUs contribution to the implementation of the WSIS Action Lines and Sustainable Development Goals.

Regional Initiatives are the five priority areas, that were elaborated and agreed by the Members of the Europe region and approved by the ITU World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC), held in 2017 in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and featured in the Buenos Aires Action Plan.

Regional initiatives are intended to address specific telecommunication/ICT priority areas that require special action of the ITU at the regional level. Under each regional initiative, a set of activities, initiatives, partnerships, and projects have been developed to meet the region's needs. The ITU Regional Initiatives for Europe include the following:

- EUR1: Broadband infrastructure, broadcasting and spectrum management
- EUR2: A citizen-centric approach to building services for national administrations
- EUR3: Accessibility, affordability and skills development for all to ensure digital inclusion and sustainable development
- EUR4: Enhancing trust and confidence in the use of information and communication technologies
- EUR5: Information and communication technology-centric innovation ecosystems

2   Regional Preparatory Meeting for WTDC-21 for Europe (RPM-EUR), 19-21 January 2021, Virtual

The Regional Preparatory Meeting for WTDC-21 for Europe (RPM-EUR) took place virtually from 18 to 19 January 2021. RPM-EUR was organized at the kind invitation of the Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Czech Republic. The meeting was attended by 114 participants including 59 delegates representing 27 Member States from Europe region, 12 participants from Sector Members, 14 participants representing 11 Observer Member States, 2 United Nations and its specialized

agencies, and 30 guests. There were, 64 female and 50 male participants. The list of participants can be found here.

After considering all input documents and discussions RPM-EUR came to the following conclusions and outcomes of the meeting:

- RPM-EUR considered the final Report of **TDAG Working Group on WTDC Preparations (TDAG-WG-Prep)** welcoming all innovations proposed so far and reiterating the importance of involvement of youth and equal participation of women in WTDC.

- RPM-EUR considered the final Report of **TDAG Working Group on Resolutions, Declaration and Thematic Priorities (TDAG-WG-RDTP)** underlining the importance of the outcomes and proposals therein, considering strengthened involvement of Europe facilitated by CEPT.

- RPM-EUR considered the final Report of **TDAG Working Group on Strategic and Operational Plans (TDAG-WG-SOP)** drawing the attention to the importance of aligning BDT activities with the goals of the Union.

- RPM-EUR recognized that the ITU-D regional priorities constitute an effective mechanism for fostering implementation of the WSIS outcomes and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

- RPM-EUR approved five regional priorities for Europe for the period 2022-2025, for submission to WTDC-21 as follows:
  - RP-EUR 1: Digital infrastructure development
  - RP-EUR 2: Digital transformation for resilience
  - RP-EUR-3: Digital inclusion and skills development
  - RP-EUR-4: Trust and confidence in the use of digital technologies
  - RP-EUR-5: Digital innovation ecosystems

- RPM-EUR welcomed the "Digital trends" report as the new series of BDT, highlighting of developments at the regional level in field of ICTs.

- RPM-EUR launched the Network of Women (NoW) for the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector, paving the way for involvement in WTDC-21.

- RPM-EUR recognized that RPM-EUR was the first meeting to have a majority of women participating.

- RPM-EUR welcomed the Youth Declaration developed by the Generation Connect – Europe Youth Group as the meaningful engagement, empowerment and participation of youth in the work of the ITU.

- RPM-EUR recognized the important work of the ITU Centres of Excellence in capacity building in Europe region and noted the launch of the 2021 CoE training catalogue providing over 20 training opportunities in the field of broadband, cybersecurity and digital services.

3   ITU Regional Engagement Forum for Europe, 13 September 2021

The ITU Regional Engagement Roundtable (RER-EUR) was organized by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and virtually hosted by the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia. The event was held remotely on 13 September 2021 back-to-back with the CEPT Committee for ITU Policies (Com-ITU) meeting, which was held remotely from 13 to 15 September 2021.

This event provided an opportunity for dialogue between the ITU Office for Europe, decision-makers of ITU Member States and Sector Members and other relevant stakeholders. Over 100 registered participants from more than 35 countries took part in the conference and an average of around 70 participants was online during each session. Participants included high-level representatives of administrations and national regulators from the ITU Europe region. The event provided a platform for assessing stakeholders' challenges related to digital development and strategic orientations that may be taken into consideration in the planning process for the work plan of the ITU Office for Europe.

The roundtable discussed the implementation of the activities of the Buenos Aires Action Plan, approved by the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-17), with particular emphasis on the five Regional Initiatives for Europe. The roundtable afforded stakeholders an opportunity to outline challenges, priorities, and commitments, as well as exchange experiences and good practices.

Due to the postponement of WTDC-21 to June 2022, the implementation period for the Buenos Aires Action Plan Regional Initiatives will continue for an additional year. To better inform the work planning process of ITU, the collection of additional operational feedback and consideration of the priorities of ITU Member States and Sector Members at the regional level is needed.

In this context, the ITU Office for Europe launched a Regional Consultation that offered the possibility for ITU Member States, Sector Members and other stakeholders to highlight the concrete challenges related to digital development at the regional and/or national levels, to better reflect the strategic needs of the region for the

implementation period January – December 2022. Interested stakeholders can browse **contributions** that will be used as the basis for further coordination and planning at the BDT level.

The Regional Engagement Roundtable was open to all stakeholders interested in strengthened cooperation and partnership among telecommunication/ICT policy-makers, regulators, industry, academia, regional and international development agencies and organizations on specific regional telecommunication/ICT and digital development matters. All key information discussed during this event can be found in the Outcome Report.

4   ITU Office for Europe and the United Nations

ITU Office for Europe plays an essential role at the regional level advocating for strategic role ICTs play in accelerating the achievement of SDGs. Europe Office proactively contributes to regional and national coordination mechanisms while strengthening strategic partnerships with a series of UN Agencies, including FAO, WHO, UNICEF, UNDP, UNECE, UN Women, UNESCO, UNIDO, others. Also, Europe Office leads two special task forces aiming to strengthen the UN contribution and support to the digital transformation in Europe.

4.1   UN Digital Transformation Group for Europe and Central Asia

Digital transformation and ICT development can be achieved through fostered multi-stakeholder cooperation and inter-agency coordination. This will occur through the engagement of multiple stakeholders in the digital sector and the exchange of best practices within the UN system. Joint actions related to information and communication technologies for achieving the SDGs should be targeted to regional needs and priorities, in the view of strengthening the implementation of cross-cutting interventions by diverse agencies operating within the UN system. The ongoing reform of the regional UN Development System offers a unique opportunity for the UN System in Europe and Central Asia to achieve the objective of improved cooperation in the digital sector.

This ambitious purpose set the foundations for the creation of the United Nations Digital Transformation Group for Europe and Central Asia (UN-DTG4ECA). The Group's mandate aims at facilitating cooperation between different UN agencies in the field of digital transformation. It further promotes coordinated UN support to Member States in their implementation of the 2030 Agenda through ICTs. It strengthens information sharing on activities of the UN System in Europe and Central Asia, while providing support to the work of the Issues Based Coalitions and the Regional Knowledge Hub covering both the Europe and the Asia regions.

In March 2021, a special stocktaking report on the UN contribution to the digital transformation has been released on the occasion of a special crosscutting session held within the framework of the UN Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for UNECE Region (more information on this session can be found under section 4.4.1 of this report). This living document provides a comprehensive overview of scalable initiatives and projects implemented at the national and regional level by the UN in order to advance digital transformation in the Europe and Central Asia regions. The stocktaking report has been updated for the UNDTG4ECA Thematic Workshop held in April in the context of the WSIS Forum (more information on this workshop can be found under section 4.5.2 of this report).

More information, including the 2021 work program and Stocktaking Report can be found at https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/Europe/Pages/Projects/DTG/Default.aspx

In April a special working group has been established with the aim of coordinating the UN preparations for and contribution to the Western Balkans Digital Summit 2021 to be held in October 2021 in Montenegro. A series of interagency proposals have been elaborated and submitted to the steering committee. Working Group involves all UN agencies as well as UN Resident Coordinators of concerned countries.

Within the framework of the UN-DTG4ECA and with the support of the UN Development Coordination Office (UNDCO), ITU Office for Europe held virtually a set of four Data Protection Executive Trainings for Resident Coordinators (RCs), Resident Coordinators Staff Office, and UN Country Teams (UNCTs) members, on the 26 and 28 October and 2 and 4 November. This training sessions were held in direct response to RCs and UNCTs specific request. Overall, more than 60 staff of the UN System at the national and Regional level were trained. Among others, countries covered included: Albania, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Russia, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. Training sessions received special intervention of Karolina Mojzesowicz, Deputy Head of Unit of the unit responsible for data protection at the European Commission (DG Justice and Consumers) and Isabelle Servoz-Gallucci, Secretary of the Convention 108 Committee , Head of Data Protection Unit, DGI Human Rights and Rule of Law, Council of Europe.

These trainings aimed at raising awareness on/ and providing elementary understanding of data protection, challenges and opportunities. It further aimed at providing relevant resources for future work and engagement related to data protection issues. In concrete, the workshop addressed and provided an overview of the following: practical examples of the application of data protection in everyday life; a brief history of the subject; the institutionalization of data protection; the main definitions related to this topic, with a focus on sensitive personal data and data subject and processor; the fundamental principles of data protection; individual rights; consent and interest and finally; notification requirements.
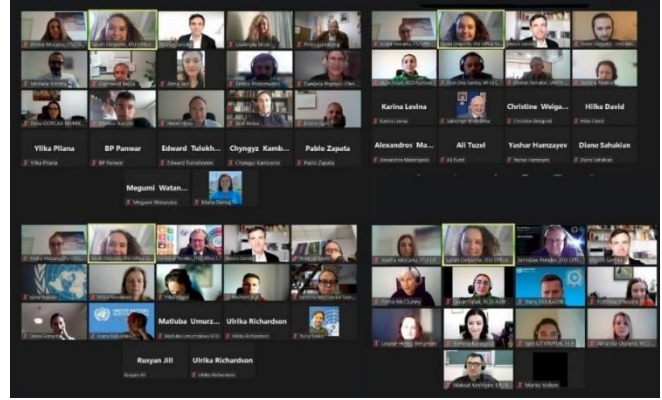
The underlying objective of the Data Protection Executive Trainings was to share expert guidance on data protection, provide guidelines, and showcase regulatory frameworks of reference, including the GDPR, to ensure appropriate data protection and minimize unlawful exchange and use of perso nal information across countries of Europe and Central Asia. The trainings also constituted a valuable platform to share good practices and seek guidance towards a safer and more productive management of citizens, customers, institutions and companies' data at the national and regional levels.

. Training sessions were accompanied by a slide deck including executive notes. An online recorder lecture for self-paced training purposes will be soon available. A roster of experts on data protection will also be set for UN System at the national level in order to provide guidance or consultancy on data protection related matters.

More information on the training sessions can be found at the dedicated webpage.

4.2   UN Brussels Team and TaskForce on Digitalization for the Sustainable Development Goals

With the objective to strengthen its cooperation with the EU structures and collaboration on the ICT projects advancing the achievement of the SDGs, ITU has joined the UN Brussels Team (UNBT). UNBT includes 27 expressions of the UN across the development, humanitarian and political mandate, and is composed of agencies, regional offices, and departments of the Secretariat.

Considering the new overarching priorities of the European Commission, the UN Brussels Team (UNBT) created various tasks Forces, allowing the agencies to have an informed and coherent engagement. Among the different task forces, the "UN Brussels Task Force on Digitalization for the SDGs" (September 2020) is co-facilitated by ITU Office for Europe together with UNIDO and UNESCO Office in Brussels and includes about 20 UN organizations. The UN Brussels Office also supports UN-EU high-level engagement and RCs/HCs missions to Brussels.

In December/January 2021, a special executive brief on EU programming was elaborated and serves as a guiding note for discussions of all UN Resident Coordinators with the Country EU Delegations on national priorities in the field of the digital transformation. Between January and April, the Task Force (hereafter TF) organized a series of coordination meeting with DG INTPA, DG CONNECT, EEAS, DG NEAR, the Digital for Development (D4D) Hub Secretariat, and the UN Tech Envoy. These meetings allowed for a clearer understanding of the recently launched EU Digital Strategy, the "Digital Compass", the Digital for Development (D4D) initiative, and the UN Secretary General Roadmap on Digital Cooperation, in order to align approaches and find synergies between the EU and the UN. Moreover, UN Brussels facilitated a series of regional coordination meetings to facilitate programming exercise of EU INTPA.

UNITED NATIONS IN BRUSSELS
June 2021

The UN in Brussels **shares** the emphasis and attention of the European Union on the life-changing opportunities offered by digital transformation. As mentioned in the Report of the UN Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation, the role of digital technologies in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals goes far beyond simply promoting greater access to the internet. With the right blend of policy, investment in infrastructure and human capacity, as well as cooperation among stakeholders, digital technologies can revolutionize fields as diverse as health, education, governance, economic empowerment, enterprise, agriculture, security, and environmental sustainability. The UN aims at putting in place the conditions to realise this scenario, while also acknowledging and reducing the potential risks posed by the fast and expanded use of digital technologies.

Within the course of May/June 2021, the EU Brussels Task Force elaborated the "UN Brussels Team Paper on Digitalization for the SDGs". This paper constitutes a strategic note which provides the value proposition of the TF to advance the implementation of the EU Strategy on the Digital "EU Digital Compass". It follows the structure of the 4 cardinal points from the EU Digital Compass to emphasis alignment with the EU Digital Strategy and suggest possible EU-UN synergies. This paper provides a brief overview of UN's capacities and support to partner countries on digital transformation and position the UN as an important partner when supporting third countries in advancing on the digital transformation across the world. Within this context, the TF elaborated a list of concrete UN flagship activities which are in line with the Digital Compass, have the potential for scalability and provide concrete examples that may be useful in the context of the EU programming exercise. The TF also took the stock of all UN Processes and Fora related to Digitalization for the period 2021/2022 and identified its link to the Digital Compass. These three aforementioned documents are primarily intended to the EU (DG INTPA, DG CNECT, EEAS, DG NEAR, DG ECHO, others.), and will pave the way for strengthened EU-UN collaboration.

On the 4th of October 2021, the TF hosted a "UN Brussels Team Briefing on Digital to EU Partners" with representatives of the UNBT, the Office of the UN Tech Envoy and the European Union (DG

INTPA, DG CNECT, DG NEAR, EEAS, IDEA, the D4D Hub Secretariat). In follow up to the various meetings held in 2020-2021 with EU Partners, this meeting intended to:

- Identify synergies between the EU and the UN strategies on digital
- Consider a broader dissemination of the below listed papers for better information sharing
- Express views on how to concretely collaborate in the coming year

Overall, the meeting offered the opportunity to engage and exchange views on how the UN and the EU can better support each other in enabling inclusive and sustainable digital societies. This meeting was also the occasion to present the 3 aforementioned papers developed by the TF as the One UN contribution to the EU public Consultation on Digital Principles, submitted on September the 2nd, 2021. Following this meeting, the the need to have concerted discussion on a selected set of topics – either geographical or thematic – has emerged. The TF is currently elaborating a catalogue of dialogues to be finalized and endorsed by the EU in December 2021, for a start of the dialogue series in January 2022. This series will, among others, support the programmatic exercise of the EU in terms of digital.

4.3 Cooperation with the UN Regional Development Coordination Office for Europe and Central Asia and UN Resident Coordinators / UN Country Teams

Pursuing the decision on strengthening the cooperation of ITU with the UN Sustainable Development System, ITU Office for Europe regularly coordinates its operations with the UN Development Coordination Office for Europe and Central Asia.

In addition, several steps were undertaken in order to join, as non-resident agency, the workflow of the UN Country Teams, strengthening their capacities on digital. As of today, UN operates in nine non-EU countries, as follows: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, North Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine. Taking into account the capacity of the Europe Office, three countries, namely Albania, Montenegro, and Moldova, have been identified as the priority countries, and Georgia was added as a focus country. Support to other UN Country Teams depends on the necessity.

Within this context, ITU is developing a series of "Digital Development Country Profile", which seeks to equip the UNCT, other decision-makers at the national level and international stakeholders with an overview of the various components of digital development at the country level. The Digital Development Country Profiles will benefit from inputs of all UN system becoming the guiding tool for future collaborative work. Such country profile has already been developed for Georgia, Moldova and North Macedonia. A country profile for Albania is currently under elaboration and will be finalized by December 2021. After which, a country profile will be elaborated for Ukraine.

4.3.1 Albania

ITU joined and signed the 2021-2025 UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) and 2022-2026 UNSDCF, and engaged itself to provide support in a range of areas, upon the need of the UNCT in order to achieve defined priorities. Potential areas include: ICT infrastructure leading towards universal access to internet and ICT services, digital skills assessment and national strategy, digital accessibility, e-agriculture, e-health, circular economy and implementation of smart cities, ICT centric innovation ecosystem development, CSIRT, child online protection, digitization of governmental services, capacity and fostering equal opportunities for girls and women in STEM sector. ITU Office for Europe follows regular meetings of the UN Country Teams. ITU Office for Europe also took part of the 2021 EU Annual Report. The Digital Development Country Profile for Albania will be finalized by December 2021, following which a special special session on digital transformation will be held, with a special focus on providing guidance to the UN Agencies members of the innovation output of the UNSDCF.

4.3.2 Bosnia and Herzegovina

In the follow up to the coordination with the UN Resident Coordinator, ITU will be joining the UNCT meeting to provide an overview of its work and intended support at the country level. ITU cannot join the UNSDCF formally until its next update. However, ITU will join the joint work plan for the period 2020-2025.

4.3.3 Georgia

ITU joined the Joint Work Plan of the UNCT and takes active participations in the regular UNCT meetings. ITU contributed to the 2021 Common Country Analysis (CCA) and 2022 CCA. The "Digital Development Country Profile" for Georgia, available here, specifically focus on providing the knowledge basis to the UNCT in the context of rolling out the UN Roadmap for Digital Cooperation in Georgia. A special "Digital Transformation Session" has been held at the end of September with the UNCT Georgia to present the findings of the Digital Development Country Profile, with a special emphasis on remaining challenges to be addressed. , The objective of this session was to pave the way for collaborative work advancing the national digital agenda. ITU, together with UNESCO Institute, finalized the Digital Innovation Profile for Georgia, with a focus on Artificial Intelligence, providing evidence-based country-specific recommendations. This profile will be published in Q4/2021. As a next step, the National Strategy for AI will be developed with engagement of the UNCT.

4.3.4 Moldova

ITU signed the United Nations Sustainable Development Framework (UNSDCF) and takes active participations in the regular UNCT meeting. ITU is to support operations of the digital task force. ITU is currently in the process of conceptualizing intervention in the field of digital accessibility. To this end, ITU has joined the Interagency Disability Inclusion Task Force and RCO is currently identifying

the possibilities for ITU to support agencies part of the UNPRPD trust fund. Other areas reported as of interest are the following: 5G implementation, regulatory field, cybersecurity.

ITU is currently coordinating with UNDP Moldova to advance digital transformation at the national level.

ITU has finalized the elaboration of the Digital Development Country Profile for Moldova which is available here. ITU and UNDP also join forces to elaborate the "Digital Transformation Compact" providing a condensed knowledge of the components and related recommendations leading to digitally transform the country. The Digital Transformation Compact is available here.

4.3.5   Montenegro

ITU joined UN Country Team in February 2021. While operationally, ITU has already started to provide inputs to the work of the UNCT and to coordinate all operations in the country. Elaboration of a New Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework has been postponed upon the request of the Government. New timeline is still to be provided.

A series of actions are planned to be undertaken with the members of the UNCT, including those focusing on digital accessibility, child online protection, gender, connectivity.

ITU is planning to hold a a special coordination session "Digital Transformation in Montenegro" in Q1/2022. This session will aim to identify the key priorities related to digitalization and digitization processes in the country and the potential for collaboration among UN agencies on the digital component. Based on the 2021 Common Country Analysis, the session will focus on: ensuring resilient ICT infrastructure, digital skills, ICT Accessibility for persons with disabilities, digital inclusion, and innovation.

Moreover, ITU cooridnated with the UN Country Team to facilitate the preparations towards the Western Balkans Digital Summit which was held from 11 to 13 October 2021.

4.3.6   North Macedonia

ITU joined the UN Country Team. Within the framework of the UNCT Retreat, ITU held a special session on Digital Transformation and Innovation, providing a platform for all UNCT members to jointly reflect and strengthen digital components in the UNCT strategy towards achieving defined 2021 priorities. Prospects for specific actions might consider eHealth, connectivity, digital accessibility, digital skills, digital inclusion (youth and gender), digitalization of all governmental services. Additionally, the office takes active participation in the regular UNCT meetings and took part of the Common Country Analysis for the period 2022.

Upon the request of the UNCT and RCO ITU held a special coordination session on the 9th of June, "Digital Transformation Agenda - where and how UN should engage to support it? ", to provide guidance to the UNCT and related Results Groups in order to capture the full potential of ICTs as enabler to achieve the targets set in the UNSDCF and subsequently the SDGs. Subsequently, ITU finalized the "Digital Development Country Profile" for North Macedonia, which can be accessed here.

4.3.7 Serbia

ITU joined the UNCT 2021 Cooperation Framework (CF) for 2021-2025 and engaged itself to provide support in a range of areas, upon the need of the UNCT in order to achieve defined 2021 priorities. ITU Office for Europe took part of the 2021 EU Annual Report for Serbia and 2022 Common Country Analysis. ITU is currently coordinating with UNOPS in Serbia to collaborate on a new 3 years project on *Towards making cities smart and sustainable*.

Potential other areas of support include: digital agriculture transformation in the country, e-health, digital skills development for creating equal opportunities for girls and women in STEM sector, the national assessment on digital skills, capacity building to ensure access to internet for all, digital skills and digital literacy, child online protection, fostering the development of the digital innovation ecosystem, ICT infrastructure leading towards universal access to internet and ICT services, digital accessibility, and digitization of governmental services.

4.3.8 Ukraine

In the follow up to the coordination with the UN Resident Coordinator, ITU will be part of the upcoming Cooperation Framework. A special taskforce on digital will be organized at the level of the UNCT. A UN position paper might be produced in the year 2022, following the series of UN Policy Papers initiative. Europe Office continues to contribute to the UNCT work and meetings and participated in the 2022 Common Country Analysis. In that sense, ITU contributed to the UN Environmental Forum in Ukraine through the participation of a Youth Representative of the ITU Generation Connected – Europe (CG-EUR) Youth Group, to convey, among others, the messages of the Youth Declaration chapter on Environment. The Office for Europe also took part of the UN Policy Paper on Climate Change (to be published).

ITU is also coordinating with UNDP Ukraine to advance digital transformation in the country.

4.3.9 Turkey

In line with the coordination with the UN Resident Coordinator, ITU Office for Europe will be providing support to the UN Country Team upon request and need. Briefings for the UNCT on digital transformation are going to be held.

4.3 UN Regional Forum for Sustainable Development for Europe and Central Asia, 17-18 March 2021

The Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for UNECE Region is organized every year by the UN Economic Commission for Europe, in close cooperation with the regional UN agencies, including ITU. In 2021 the forum took place on 17 and 18 March 2020 in a hybrid format and was preceded by virtual peer learning round tables from 10 to 16 March 2021. This yearly forum was meant to follow up on and review the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals – SDGs – in the UNECE Region. As the UN Agency for ICTs, ITU continues to advocate for the enabling role of ICTs in achieving SDGs. More information can be found at https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/Europe/Pages/Events/2021/RFSD/Default.aspx

This year, ITU co-leaded and contributed to a series of side event and roundtables as follows:

Cross-Cutting session on Digitalization "Digital Transformation for Sustainable Development Goals in the Wake of COVID-19" on the 15th March 2021, from 10:00 to 12:30 CET, virtual.

The session covered three focus topics: ensuring universal digital inclusion, accelerating the digitalization of services, creating an enabling environment for digital trade. The Cross-Cutting session, resulting from the joint efforts of the UN Digital Transformation Group for Europe and Central Asia, constitutes an enhancing opportunity for stakeholders who directly contributed and benefited from the implementation of UN projects to share their experiences and effective best practices in the field of digital transformation for the SDGs.

Side event on gendered digital divide: Digitally Empowered Generation Equality in the wake of COVID-19, 9th March 2021, 10:00-12:00 CET, virtual. This event, organized by ITU and UN Women, focused on sharing recommendations and best practices that addressed the root causes of the gendered digital divide. These recommendations and best practices were drawn from ITU and UN Women Digitally Empowered Generation Equality Report, that was launched during this session. The event also provided an overview of the current ecosystem when it comes to Women, Girls, and ICT in the context of COVID-19 in selected countries of the ITU Europe region.

Roundtable on Cluster 1 "People": Strengthening health, food and social protection systems towards COVID-19 recovery and resilience 10th March 2021, 14:00-16.00 CET, virtual. Session 1-1: Health and social protection

This session presented and discussed innovative ways on how governments have taken action to reduce the COVID burden, while aiming at sustainable development. Specifically, it focused on strengthening health governance capacities for emergency preparedness and bettering health securities and resilience building during and after COVID 19 to achieve the SDGs; strengthening social protection to avoid further impacts of emergencies; as well as strengthening intersectoral collaboration for emergency preparedness to build back better after COVID- 19.

Roundtable on Cluster 2 "Prosperity": Building back innovative, inclusive and sustainable economies and providing decent and productive jobs for all 11th March 2021, 10:00-12:00 CET, virtual. Session 2-2: The socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on youth

COVID-19 impacted all segments of society, especially young people, who are disproportionately affected by the crisis. The roundtable showcased innovative governmental, youth and youth-led responses to address the challenges faced by the young people due to COVID-19. The central objective was to harness the rapid move towards digitalization to build resilient economies and communities, close the digital divide, enhance social cohesion and ensure that all young people benefit from a meaningful and inclusive digital world. In this context, a member of the Generation Connect-Europe Youth Group (GC-EUR) shared its experience of its country and of other GC-EUR Members' countries initiatives to tackle Covid-19 related issues directly affecting the youth.

4.4   Cross-Cutting Session on Digitalization: Digital Transformation in the Wake of COVID-19, 15 March 2021

Within the framework of the 2021 Regional Forum for Sustainable Development, ITUled, together with UNECE, a Cross-cutting Session on Digitalization: Digital Transformation in the Wake of COVID-19, which was held virtually on 15 March 2021 from 10:00 to 12:30 CET. The meeting benefited from English-Russian translation and captioning services. 422 registered participants from 127 countries took part in the conference and around 400 participants were online during the Session (including on livestreams on Twitter and YouTube).


UN agencies which contributed to this session were members of the UN Digital Transformation Group for Europe and Central Asia (UNDT4ECA). This session focused on the urgent needs of accelerating digital transformation across different sectors as an immediate response to COVID-19. It provided an opportunity for

representatives of UN agencies and partners to highlight a series of actions, activities, initiatives and partnerships that advance digitalization and digitization processes in capacity building and skills development, health, trade, agriculture, governance, and urbanization, among others. The session also highlighted the importance of meaningful connectivity, equal access to information and communication technologies (ICTs), as well as digital skills and literacy amongst different groups of society.

Overall, this session aimed to promote the coordinated approach of UN agencies to support Member States in their implementation of the 2030 Agenda through ICTs. In particular, the session had a cross-cutting character and targeted all SDGs of the 2021 focus, namely: SDG 1, "No poverty"; SDG 2, "Zero Hunger"; SDG 3, "Good health and well-being"; SDG 4, "Quality education"; SDG 8, "Decent work and Economic growth"; SDG 9, "Industry, innovation and infrastructure"; SDG 10, "Reduced inequalities"; SDG 12, "Responsible consumption and production"; SDG 13, "Climate action"; and SDG 17, "Partnerships for the goals". Key points discussed during the session can be found in the Outcome Report, and its summary.
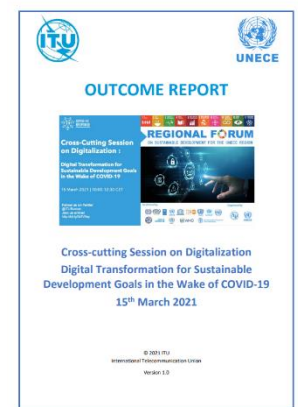
4.5. ITU Office for Europe and the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Forum

ITU Office for Europe continues to proactively contribute to the WSIS Process. Both regional contests (Innovative Digital Solutions for Accessible Europe and Digital Excellence in Agriculture) have been designed in the way to create synergies with the ongoing WSIS Stocktaking/Prizes. A special publication on ICT Projects and WSIS Action Line Related Activities in Europe was prepared and released at the Regional Preparatory Meeting. In addition Europe Office facilitated two special sessions within the framework of the WSIS Forum 2021, as follows:

4.5.1 ICTs for Inclusive, Resilient and Sustainable Societies and Economies (WSIS Action Lines for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals) – Europe Region

Focusing on the Europe region, this thematic workshop held on the 16 April 2021 aimed to draw attention to the ongoing efforts of ITU and its partners in implementing the ITU Regional Initiatives for Europe, whose objectives are directly linked to the WSIS Action Lines and the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Therefore, achieved results effectively contribute to both WSIS and SDG processes. The workshop presented a series of flagship actions undertaken recently by the ITU Office for Europe in the areas of Connectivity, Digital Skills, Child Online Protection, Digital Accessibility and Digital Services through the presentation of a series of country-based case studies and best practices.

Learn more about the workshop: https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2021/Agenda/Session/307

4.5.2 UNDTG4ECA: Driving the WSIS Action Lines to foster digital transformation in Europe and Central Asia

This thematic workshop held on the 26 April 2021 was organized by the United Nations Digital Transformation Group for Europe and Central Asia (UNDTG4ECA), and was facilitated by ITU and UNECE, co-leader of the group. This workshop built upon the Cross-Cutting Session on Digitalization, held within the framework of the Regional Forum for Sustainable Development, where increasing multi-stakeholder, cross-sectoral and inter-agency coordination at national and regional levels has been recognized as key to capture the enabling potential of ICTs in achieving the SDGs. Through interactive panel discussions and the participation of multiple representatives of UN agencies, the workshop drew attention to projects, initiatives and efforts aiming at advancing implementation of the WSIS Actions Lines. This workshop also provided a platform for multi-stakeholder discussion on challenges and opportunities identified at the national/regional level. Each participating UN agency had the opportunity to draw attention to flagship initiatives advancing digital transformation.

Learn more about the workshop: https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2021/Agenda/Session/308

5   ITU Office for Europe and European Union

Significant efforts have been dedicated with the aim of strengthening of cooperation between ITU and the European Union and its institutions and platforms

- Regular coordination with corresponding institutions
    - o Directorates General, incl. CONNECT, INTPA, NEAR, EEAS
    - o EU Delegation in Geneva
- Follow up activities to the Memoranda of Understanding
    - o BEREC and EaPeReg
    - o Discussions on possible MoU with EMREG
    - o Discussions on possible MoU with RCC (Western Balkans)
- Proactive membership in the UN Brussels Team
    - o Chairing of the TaskForce on Digitalization for Sustainable Development
- Support to the programming exercise of INTPA for the multiannual programming in the implementation of the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation, with the focus on Digital.

ITU Office for Europe facilitates organization of special events.

- 1 October 2021: Meeting with EU Political and Security Council Members to present the work of ITU with particular focus on digital development.
- 27 October 2021: ITU-EU-AU Digital Briefing for Ambassadors on Advancing the Digital Agenda in #Africa and explore opportunities to strengthen our collaboration towards a more equal, inclusive, and connected world.

6   ITU Regional Initiatives for Europe 2021

The following presents all activities planned or carried out during the period of January to November 2021. Activities are presented per Regional Initiative and in a chronological order.

6.1 EUR1: Broadband infrastructure, broadcasting and spectrum management

6.1.1 Technical Assistance to Albania on Frequency Planning

The technical assistance to Albania supported the country in the elaboration of a new frequency plan that would enable interference-free de-allocation of the 700 MHz band from broadcasting to mobile communications. The assistance was carried out in the form of twinning with the National Media and Infocommunications Authority of Hungary over a period of three months.

As part of the activity closure, it was agreed with the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure of Albania to hold a national workshop on 13 April 2021, organized with the support of the ITU Office for Europe. This workshop was aimed at raising awareness at the national level with regards to the importance of coordinated and detailed frequency planning.

It showcased the work undertaken over the past 6 months to elaborate a frequency plan for Albania aimed at freeing up of DD2 in line with the Radio Regulations agreed at WRC-19.

Beyond providing an overview of the plan and its relevance for the country, the workshop also addressed the perspective of different stakeholders involved in the elaboration process at the national level, including AMA, MIE, and AKEP, which discussed how the plan will enable progress in the respective areas of competence and mark a step forward from the previous status quo.

The workshop featured the perspectives of the supporting agency in the technical assistance project, NMHH of Hungary, which will provide further recommendations and key areas of focus for the future. Finally, participants also benefited of intervention of the ITU on the wider WRC process and developments affecting frequency planning and coordination.

The workshop was targeted at all interested stakeholders at the country level, representatives of industry, and academia, who had dedicated space to intervene with questions and comments.

6.1.2 Technical Assistance to Montenegro on IPv6

The technical assistance to Montenegro on IPv6 is focused on equipping the country with the necessary equipment, technical knowledge, and strategic approach to IPv6, thereby enabling the transition from IPv4 to IPv6.

The Assistance is composed of 2 phases. The first phase, which has been completed, includes I) a national workshop for policymakers held on 20-21 April 2021, ii) a Training of national experts held

from 10th to 14th of May 2021, and iii) the elaboration of the strategic plan to establish an IPv6 Laboratory at the country level.

i) National Workshop

This workshop was aimed at raising awareness at the national level with regards to the transition from IPv4 to IPv6. It showcased the work of the ITU undertaken over the past years and brief policymakers on the importance of this activity.

Beyond providing an overview of IPv6 and its relevance for the country, the workshop also addressed the main technical challenges foreseen for a successful implementation of IPv6 at the national level and elaborate on the strategic approach needed among key players to make this step forward.

The workshop also presented the steps ITU and EKIP are taking to initiate the transition to IPv6 and presented the forthcoming training of experts that will be held in the month of May. The workshop is targeted at all main policymakers at the country level, but also at representatives of industry, and academia, who will have dedicated space to intervene with questions and comments.

Ii) Training of Experts

The training of experts successfully trained around 25 experts in the country with the in-country support of EKIP. This entailed 5 days of training with 4 hours of practical training per day . The training was delivered with the support of MUST University of Malaysia, building upon previous technical assistances delivered by the ITU.

Iii) Strategic plan for IPv6 Implementation in Montenegro

The strategic plan assesses the current situation with regards to the transition from IPv4 to IPv6 in Montenegro, by pinpointing key challenge areas and identifying possible solutions for triggering the much needed transition at the country level. THe report identifies training of experts at the country level as of primary importance, and hence the establishment of a laboratory at the country level. Taking stock of currently available equipment, it identifies three possible solutions to establish such laboratory at the country level.

Based on the three experiences above, the second phase of the technical assistance is focusing on the establishment of the IPv6 Laboratory, responding to a direct request for assistance by the country. ITU is supporting the development of the laboratory with the purchase of the needed equipment, in line with the recommendations of the strategic plan. The laboratory will support the country in developing capacity and train experts at the national level, with particular focus on training IT professionals from public institutions across the country.

6.1.3 Memorandum of Cooperation on ITU Interactive Transmission Maps with Ukraine

As part of the project on ITU Interactive Transmission Maps aimed at gathering data on global backbone networks, ITU and the Ministry of Digital Transformation of the Government of Ukraine signed a Memorandum of Cooperation. According to the MoC, the two organisations will strengthen cooperation in the field of mapping and the Ukraine will support the ITU collection, validation and transferring data on backbone networks at the national level to the ITU. The MoC is the last of a series of Letters of Engagement (LoEs) which institutionalized cooperation with a number of administrations in charge of broadband mapping at the country level, including Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro and Serbia, with more in the pipeline for 2021.

6.1.4 Collaborative Regulation Case Studies: Romania and Moldova

The Regulatory and Market Environment Division of BDT has launched a series of country case studies on regulatory and institutional frameworks and collaborative governance in selected countries from different regions. The case studies highlight diverse experiences and different policy and regulatory patterns in order to explore the challenges, new ideas and lessons learnt by regulators on the path towards collaborative regulation. The case studies also focus on developing a better understanding of the role and impact of collaboration and collaborative governance, and the use of new tools for regulating ICT markets.

The case studies are being developed based on a four-fold methodology following these components:

1. Questionnaire on fifth generation regulation (G5 Benchmark)
2. Interviews with key national stakeholders
3. Case study narrative
4. High level policy brief

The library of case studies has been launched at GSR-21 which was held between April and June 2021, and featured on the ITU website. The findings and insights generated during the process will be integrated into a global project on the transition to collaborative regulation, to be released during WTDC. The individual case studies will also be leveraged in other ITU and partner initiatives.

- As part of the initiative, the ITU Office for Europe identified Moldova and Romania as countries where to conduct the first case studies in the region. Within this context, a national workshop for Moldova has being organized together with the respective NRAs to present the case studies and hand over the High level policy brief. Collaborative Regulation Case Study for Moldova is available here.

- The Collaborative Regulation Case Study for Romania was finalized and handed over to the administration.

6.1.5 Regional Assessment on EMF and Risk Communication Challenges

During several initiatives organized in 2020 on the topics of 5G and spectrum management, the issue of EMF emerged of primary importance. In response to national and regional stakeholders' concerns about the issue, and in response to the increasing attention attracted in Europe region, the ITU Office for Europe designed a Regional Assessment on "EMF limit levels and risk communication challenges" that prompted ICT Ministries or Regulatory Authorities in charge of EMF to respond to a questionnaire.

The questionnaire included 14 questions distributed in 5 main areas including:

1) EMF national regulation
2) Approval procedures prior to building / planning permission
3) Measurement of EMF
4) Acceptability by the public
5) Risk Communication

31 institutions from 29 countries responded to the questionnaire and provided the basis for the elaboration of the Executive Report – ITU Regional Assessment for Europe on EMF limit levels and risk communication challenges" which contains 5 recommendations relating to the 5 areas of the questionnaire. The report also serves as a reference point for the wider stakeholder community in Europe during future capacity building initiatives undertaken by the ITU Office for Europe and beyond.
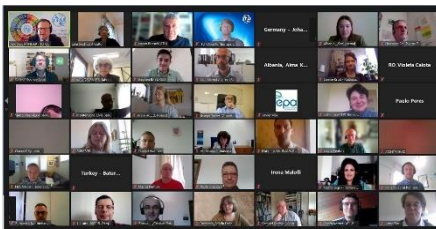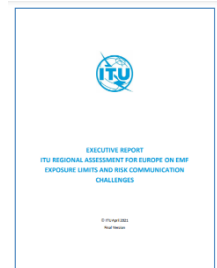
The Executive report has been presented during a 2 hour operational meeting held on 27 April 2021 featuring representatives of ICNIRP and WHO as well as the focal points and relevant institutions from over 25 countries. The presentation was followed by an interactive discussion with participants to identify remaining gaps and the way forward for capacity building initiatives undertaken by the ITU Office for Europe, and possible technical assistances on this matter.

The report also complements the Report on "Implementing 5G For Good: Do Emfs Matter?" launched in October 2020 and officially published in 2021.

6.1.6 ITU Regional Forum for Europe on Meaningful Connectivity, 8-9 March 2021, Virtual

The ITU Regional Forum for Europe on Meaningful Connectivity was organized by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) with the support of Ministry of Public Administration of the Republic of Slovenia. Originally planned in Ljubljana, Slovenia, the Forum took place virtually from 8-9 March 2021. The Forum was held as a follow up to 2020 activities aimed at building capacity and advancing the connectivity agenda in the Europe region, including the ITU Regional Regulatory Forum for Europe and the ITU Regional forum for Europe on 5G strategies, policies and implementation. Moreover, the event was held in follow up to the Global Symposium for Regulators 2020 (GSR-20) and the GSR-20 Best Practice Guidelines and the GSR-20 Regional Regulatory Roundtable Discussion for Europe and CIS.

It provided a unique opportunity for dialogue between stakeholders on strategies and policies aimed at connecting the unconnected and at ensuring that connectivity is leveraged meaningfully, thereby contributing to social and economic development and accelerating the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Forum focused on:

5   The Digital Divide in Europe: Ensuring meaningful and inclusive connectivity

6   Connecting Rural Areas in Europe: Regional and national approaches

7   Use of ICTs in Public institutions: A focus on connecting schools

8   Fostering Digital Skills development: Supporting demand creation for connectivity.

The outcomes of this Forum contributed to the work of ITU, including the activities undertaken by the Study Group of the Development Sector, as well as other initiatives undertaken in line with the UN Secretary General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation. Moreover, the outcomes of this forum are relevant for ITU's workstreams relating to the following projects:

- ITU Interactive Transmission Maps

- Giga – Connecting every school to the Internet

The Regional Forum for Europe brought together around 140 attendees including European policymakers, government officials, international organizations, business leaders, industry experts and academia.

6.1.7 Special Training for Europe on "ICT Infrastructure Business Planning", 15 March – 14 May 2021 (Online, instructor led)

The Special Training for Europe on ICT Infrastructure Business Planning was organized by ITU Regional Forum for Europe with the support of the Telecommunication Networks and Spectrum Management Division (TNS), the Regulatory and Market Environment Division (RME) and the Capacity and Digital Skills Development Division (CDS) of the Telecommunication Development Bureau.

The Training on ICT Infrastructure Business Planning offered more than 30 regulators, policymakers, and stakeholders from 14 countries a practical approach for the accurate economic evaluation of broadband infrastructure installation and deployment plans in urban and rural areas. This will support the countries in the planning and implementation of broadband projects, thereby contributing to social and economic development and accelerating the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In addition to the course, some participants attended the Clinic, a three week hands on training on a specific project of choice. 6 projects were presented at the concluding meeting of this activity.

The expert guidance offered in this course is based on the ITU ICT Infrastructure Business Planning Toolkit and has the aim at facilitating the development of a credible and coherent business plan adaptable to a wide range of broadband infrastructure deployment projects. The main objective of this hands-on training is to build knowledge and skills of participants on the principles of business planning and practicing it, in the context of supporting policy and regulatory decision-making on infrastructure development. It will discuss on the main aspects related to the theme, such as: estimation of demand, expected revenues and operational costs, definition of parameters related to investments and definitions related to the Weighted Average Cost of Capital (WACC) and finally, calculation of the Net Present Value (NPV). There is also a specific section aimed at identifying public mechanisms for financing ICT infrastructure projects.

6.1.8 2021 Western Balkans Digital Summit: "Balancing hard and soft infrastructure to ensure meaningful and inclusive connectivity", 12 October (online)

This session was held on 12 October within the framework of the 2021 edition of the "Western Balkans Digital Summit 2021" (11-13 October 2021) co-organized by ITU and this year hosted by the Government of Montenegro.

Broadband connectivity is of great importance to make full use of the potential of the Internet. Hard infrastructure, however, is no longer enough; soft infrastructure such as institutions, laws, design andimplementation of strategies, and appropriate policies are needed. This session seeked to engage stakeholders in a holistic discussion around broadband development in Western Balkans, focusing on challenges and success stories. This session was also the occasion to launch the joint ITU-UNICEF Report on "Connectivity in Education: Status and recent developments in nine non-European Union countries".

6.1.9 ITU-UNICEF Regional Briefing on Connectivity in Education: Status and recent developments in nine non-European Union Countries of the Europe Region, 10 November 2021 (Online)
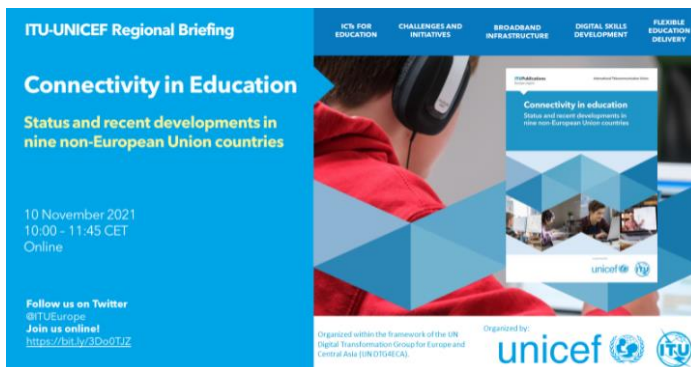
The ITU-UNICEF Regional Briefing on "Connectivity in Education: Status and recent developments in nine non-European Union countries" was held online on 10 November 2021. The Regional Briefing was jointly organized by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Office for Europe and the UNICEF Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia within the context of the UN Digital Transformation Group for Europe and Central Asia (UN DTG4ECA), and with the support of the UN Development Coordination Office (DCO).

The Regional Briefing was held in the follow up to the launch of the Report, within the framework of the ITU Regional Initiatives for Europe on broadband development (1) and digital skills (3), and in support of the priorities of UNICEF's Learnin initiative in Europe and Central Asia, which operationalizes UNICEF's global Reimagine Education initiative in the region. It was attended by nearly 90 participants.

The briefing was the occasion to present the outcomes of the recently launched ITU-UNICEF report on *Connectivity in Education*, while drawing attention to the ongoing efforts and commitment of ITU, UNICEF and partners in ensuring meaningful and inclusive connectivity, and providing a platform for dialogue between international and national stakeholders.

The briefing mainly focused on providing an overview of the findings of the report, which reviews the status of ICTs as drivers of i) digital skills development, ii) e-governance of education systems, and iii) smart and flexible education delivery at school and at home, and provides aggregate and country-level updates on connectivity in education in **Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turley and Ukraine**. It also allowed stakeholders from the European Commission, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Ukraine to exchange on what has already been done at the country level, as well as to identify the remaining challenges and possible actions to be taken to address those challenges.
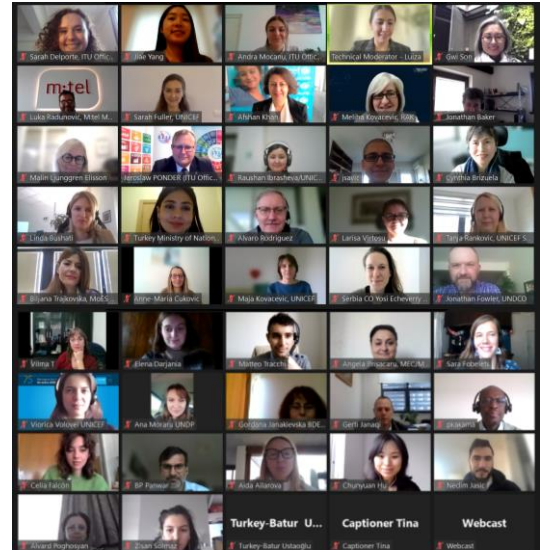
In line with the regional framework of the UN Sustainable Development System, this briefing provided an example of multi-agency cooperation strengthening the delivery of UN system in terms of accuracy, reach and impact at the regional level.

In the follow-up, national workshop providing a deep-dive in the country case and policy recommendations on how to overcome remaining challenges will be held upon interest of Member States.

All information on this Regional briefing, including the Outcome Report, recording of the session and captioning can be found at the dedicated webpage here.

6.1.10 ITU Global Symposium for Regulators Plus (GSR+): Regional Regulatory Roundable for Europe and Africa, 14 April 2021

The ITU GSR-21 Regional Regulatory Roundtable for Europe and Africa was organized on 14 April 2021 within the framework of GSR-21, and engaged more than 550 interested stakeholders. The roundtable was aimed in particular at representatives of the National Regulatory Authorities from Europe and Africa regions, as well as other stakeholders to advance discussions on regulation for digital transformation aimed at accelerating inclusive connectivity, access and use.

Special focus was be dedicated to the role of NRAs in shaping an enabling environment for the development of resilient digital connectivity for all. The discussion also touched upon collaborative regulation, facilitating investment in broadband networks and strengthening interregional cooperation between Europe and Africa regions.

In addition, the meeting featured a dedicated session on Collaborative Regulation which showcased and provided the space for discussion on the work being carried out with the country case studies in both Europe and Africa regions. The meeting also saw a special session informing delegates on the process that will lead towards the elaboration of the GSR Best Practice Guidelines, being an outcome document of the Global Symposium for Regulators scheduled for the end of June 2021.

6.1.11 Elaboration of ITU Mapping Guidelines based on the European experience

In the context of the ITU Regional Regulatory Forum for Europe on Regulation Supporting Digital Transformation, held virtually on 30th November and 1st December 2020, two background papers were produced on the following topics:

1. Broadband Mapping Systems in Europe and Regional Harmonization Initiatives
2. Infrastructure sharing and co-deployment in Europe: good practices based on collaborative regulation

The first paper outlining the European Union's regulatory framework on broadband mapping attracted stakeholders' attention, particularly from those countries in South Eastern Europe which are seeking to frame regulations and technical systems for broadband mapping on those of the European Union.

For this reason, the ITU Office for Europe is currently strengthening this paper by elaborating ITU Mapping Guidelines based on the European experience. The Guidelines will not only consolidate the strategic, institutional and policy requirements of efficient broadband mapping, but also guide on the design and implementation of projects aimed at constructing technical systems at the country level. In doing so, the Guidelines aim at setting clear steps required for a successful implementation of broadband mapping systems from all angles, to be used in non-EU countries and other countries seeking to mirror, to some degree, the European experience.

This exercise is carried out with the support of UKE (Office for Electronic Communications), Poland and in close coordination with European Commission, BEREC, EaPeReg, World Bank and benefits from other NRAs such as, AKOS (Slovenia), Arcep (France), BNetzA (Germany), ANACOM (Portugal), RTR (Austria).

6.1.12 ITU-EKIP Regional Regulatory Forum for Europe, 27-28 September 2021

In follow up to the previous editions [2019; 2020], the ITU-EKIP Regional Regulatory Forum for Europe on "Universal Connectivity for a Post-Pandemic Digital Europe" took place virtually from 27th to 28th September 2021, organized by the ITU office for Europe and the Agency for Electronic Communications and Postal Services (EKIP) of Montenegro. It was held with an aim of facilitating high-speed connectivity with resilient and synergistic infrastructure development, deployment and sharing, whilst ensuring a trusted and quality user experience.

This event provided a unique opportunity for high-level dialogue between stakeholders on strategies and policies directed towards broadband development in the European region, with particular focus on fixed and mobile markets, and also on the tools and frameworks at disposal of National Regulatory Authorities to ensure effective outcomes. Having in mind the particular situation generated by COVID-19, the discussion had a closer look at post-pandemic and recovery scenarios. In this context, the event also offered an opportunity to discuss particular actions on regulatory matters and beyond which would be needed in specific national contexts.

Particular focus was given to:

- Policy and regulatory incentives for affordable and robust connectivity;Regulatory action on ICT accessibility to ensure uptake of digital technologies; Strategies, policies and regulation accelerating deployment of mobile connectivity in implementing 5G;Evidence-based regulation using broadband mapping and other tools in market analysis and market visualization

Over 230 registered participants from more than 30 countries took part in the ITU-EKIP Regional Regulatory Forum for Europe 2021 and an average of around 100 participants was online during each session. Participants included high-level representatives of administrations and national regulators from the ITU Europe region including, delegates from the Agency for Electronic Communications and Postal Services (EKIP) of Montenegro, delegates from the European Commission, and representatives of National Regulatory Authorities in the region. More information is available on the event webpage and in the outcome report.

6.1.13 ITU Workshop on the Future of Television for Europe, 19 November 2021

In follow up to past workstreams on broadcasting and television [2018 ; 2019], ITU organized a regional workshop as a follow up to the successful series of workshops and events on the future of TV, which have been organized in various regions of the world with the support of the three bureaus of the ITU: standardization (TSB), radiocommunication (BR) and development (BDT).

ITU Workshop on the Future of Television for Europe was held on 19 November 2019 and attracted over 270 stakeholders. The aim of the workshop was to discuss the future of television for Europe with relevant stakeholders, covering regulatory and policy frameworks, emerging and convergent ICT Infrastructures and services, as well as user interfaces and accessibility issues. It also provided an opportunity to discuss TV-related regional and international standardization and to share best practices and case studies on TV implementations over various media as well as new TV services. The role of television as a reliable source of information and means to provide entertainment was also discussed, including how the television can help solve societal challenges introduced by the lockdown, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The event was supported by the ITU-T SG9 (Cable broadband and TV), ITU-T SG16 (Multimedia), ITU-R SG6 (Broadcasting service) as well as ITU-D SG1 /Q2/1 (Strategies, policies, regulations and methods of migration and adoption of digital broadcasting and implementation of new services) and is an opportunity to bridge the requirements and needs of various countries with the standards community.

The event outcomes will contribute to the workflow of respective ITU Study Groups, namely:
- ITU-T SG9: Broadband cable and TV
- ITU-T SG16: Multimedia
- ITU-R SG6: Broadcasting service
- ITU-D SG1: Enabling environment for the development of telecommunications/ICTs
- ITU-D SG2: ICT services and applications for the promotion of sustainable development

More details on the event, including a set of presentations is available at https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/Workshops-and-Seminars/2021/1119/Pages/default.aspx

6.1.14 "New layer of the ITU Interactive Transmission Maps on National Broadband Mapping Systems Initiatives"

The "New Graphical Interface of the Interactive Transmission Mapping Map" is a Global initiative of ITU that aims at building transmission maps about backbone networks. The new layer will display all 193 ITU member states practices and capacity in the field of broadband mapping systems, thus

complementing the existing and on-going collecting effort on ICT Data that has enabled the establishment of ITU's data platform since 2012.

This exercise is based on the model of the European experience which entailed the engagement of 46 countries identifying relevant information about national broadband mapping systems and establishing the community of experts.

This global outreach on the subject of broadband mapping systems demonstrated how different parts of the world are equipping themselves for broadband mapping system activities, but it appears that this heterogeneity in this field is an extremely promising avenue for ITU to establish itself as the global actor on the broadband landscape, shaping its future development.

6.1.15 Technical Assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina on enabling environment for broadband mapping

This project responds to a direct request for assistance from the Communications Regulatory Authority (CRA). Leveraging expertise from AKOS, It will support the country in reviewing the enabling environment for broadband mapping in the country and provide recommendations on the key governance and regulatory steps to be taken as a basis for future successful implementation of broadband mapping systems in the country.

6.1.16 Technical Assistance to Moldova on Infrastructure Resilience and Mapping System

This action responds to the immediate need to strengthen the resilience of the ICT infrastructure at the country level. Within the framework of the Connect2Recover project assessment of the resilience of infrastructure will be carried out to identify gaps and areas of action.

In addition direct assistance to the Regulator has been scheduled in order to build solid foundations for strengthening of capabilities of broadband mapping system at the country level.

6.1.17 5G Techritory 2021 and ITU side event, 22-25 November

"5G Techritory: Europe's leading 5G Ecosystem Forum", will be held online from 22 to 25 November 2021 (originally planned to take place in Riga, Latvia). The Forum is organized by the Electronic Communication Office of Latvia in close cooperation with the ITU.

5G Techritory is a platform for the development of a healthy 5G ecosystem, which serves as a role model for building the European Gigabit Society. This year, the Forum will focus on the theme "the real value of 5G" exploring various dimensions of 5G implementation that include cross-sector standardization, taking stock of testbeds and trials, discussing consumer 5G, business and regulatory business models for financing, and other.

Within this context, ITU is organising a special side event on "5G ecosystem development in Europe – discussing private and public initiatives" that will be held on 25th November, from 12:00 to 13:30 CET. This event will provide the platform for panellists to share experiences, challenges and best practices in their strategic approaches to ecosystem development, at national and/or regional levels, when creating trials and testbeds, regulatory sandboxes, industry alliances, and other initiatives. The event will be held in phygital format, with panellists attending live and online, and proceedings being broadcasted online.

6.1.18 EMF limit levels and communication challenges (global project)

Based on the experience of the successful implementation of the Regional Assessment for Europe (5.1.5), this project seeks to strengthen the overall position of the ITU with regards to EMF and construct a more solid institutional reference point for its membership with regard to EMF policy and communication.

It will do so through the following building blocks:

- BB1: replicating the regional assessments in the other 5 regions of the ITU and developing the community of experts at the regional and national levels.
- BB2: inputting the results of regional assessments into the establishment of a WHO-ITU-ILO Handbook "Establishing A Dialogue on risk from electromagnetic fields"
- BB3: Gathering all knowledge available in ITU and other public institutions to build a publicly-driven certified training programme for officials of Ministries, NRAs and other public institutions.

ITU Office for Europe will be actively contributing to the implementation of this project.

6.1.19 International Conference on Radio waves are not visible – What we do to make them transparent – Standards and Regulations (1-2 December 2021, Hybrid Format - Cracow, Poland and Online)

In cooperation with the ITU Office for Europe and context of the expected results of the ITU Regional Initiatives for Europe, the National Institute of Telecommunications in cooperation with the Chancellery of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland, organize the annual International Educational and Scientific Conference to be held virtually on 1-2 December 2021 and will be devoted to the issues of the impact of the electromagnetic field on human life and health and the environment, in the context of the development of telecommunications technologies, especially 5G network solutions.

"Radio waves are NOT visible. What we do to make them transparent - standards and regulations" is the motto of this year's 6th edition of the Conference. The subject of the first day of the Conference will be how the permissible limits for electromagnetic fields are set and how compliance with them in Poland and in the world is verified. We will also focus on communicating issues related to electromagnetic fields, and in particular on how to talk about this complex physical phenomenon in order to easily pass on difficult knowledge to a wide audience.

The second day of the Conference will be devoted to medicine, education and the fight against fake news. It will be divided into three thematic panels to which Polish and foreign experts will be invited.

Due to the prevailing COVID-19 pandemic and the related restrictions, the Conference will be held online from the studio in Krakow on December 1st and 2nd, 2021, from 9:00 am to 6:00 pm. The event can be followed on the profile of the National Institute of Telecommunications on YouTube and on the website of the Conference - konferencjapem.wydarzeniaonline.pl. The first 200 registered people will be able to comment on the speakers' speeches and ask them questions in the chat. More information can be found on the dedicated website of the event.

The Conference takes place completely remotely and is free of charge. Participation in the Conference is possible after registering at the following address: https://konferencjapem.wydarzeniaonline.pl/login/.

6.1.20 Publications

Three reports have been completed and published , namely:

- 5G implementation in non-EU   countries of Europe region
- Implementing 5G for Good: Do EMFs matter?
- Connectivity in Education: Status and recent developments in nine non-European Union countries
  - A summary of the report and abstracts of each country are also availbale at the following links, respectively:
    - Summary of the Report - Aggregated perspectives
    - Summary - Albania
    - Summary - Bosnia and Herzegovina
    - Summary - Georgia
    - Summary - Moldova
    - Summary - Montenegro
    - Summary - North Macedonia
    - Summary - Serbia
    - Summary - Turkey
    - Summary - Ukraine

- Beyond the Regional Assessment on "EMF limit levels and risk communication challenges in Europe", other one report has been drafted and will undergo the usual ITU validation as well as validation with the countries and other stakeholders: These include: **The Status of Connectivity in 9 non-EU countries of Europe region**
  This paper is published as "living document" until final version will be elaborated.

6.2   EUR2: A citizen-centric approach to building services for national administrations

Digital agriculture

6.2.1   Digital Excellence in Agriculture: ITU-FAO Regional Contest in Europe and Central Asia

The ITU-FAO Study on the Status of Digital Agriculture in 18 countries of Europe and Central Asia highlighted the need for coordination among stakeholders, as the use of ICTs in agriculture has spawned a consistent wave of innovation. Following this observation and as an integral part of this cooperation, in November, ITU and FAO launched the "Digital Excellence in Agriculture: ITU-FAO Contest in Europe and Central Asia", with the aim to overcome the various challenges of sustainable and resilient food systems. In accordance with the core principles of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, this Contest aimed at working towards closing the digital, rural and gender divides, known as the triple divide, in order to include all members of society in this unprecedented transition. The webpage of the contest can be accessed here.

The regional contest follows seven phases:

1. Call for Good Practices in the field of Digital Agriculture in Europe and Central Asia - Submission of good practices from 4 November until 11 January 2021;
2. Nomination of outstanding practices in the course of May 2021;
3. Production of a stocktaking report including all good practices received;
4. Selection of the finalists and awardees;
5. Production of a special promotional video focusing on outstanding good practices as well as the production of the "Digital Excellence in Agriculture report";
6. "Digital Excellence in Agriculture: ITU-FAO Regional Contest in Europe and Central Asia" virtual Awards Ceremony on 23 September 2021;
7. Launch of the "Digital Excellence in Agriculture report" on 15 December 2021.

With nearly 200 applicants from 38 countries in the regions, the first phase of the Regional Contest revealed a diverse, dynamic and future-thinking ecosystem of innovators and problem-solvers. It empowered individuals and organizations applying innovative methods of ICTs to showcase solutions and best practices in response to the agriculture challenges of Europe and Central Asia. 171 solutions were considered to meet the eligibility criteria to enter the Digital Excellence in Agriculture contest. As a result of the evaluation process, 28 practices were nominated as finalists to compete for the final part of the contest. The announce was held during the ITU-FAO "Stocktaking Report: Digital Excellence in Agriculture - Good practices in the field of digital agriculture" Launching Event on 9 July 2021.

The evaluation committee identified 21 outstanding practices (three per category) which competed for the Special Recognition of Digital Excellence in Agriculture. Additionally, the evaluation committee selected 7 champions (one per category) coming from the 18 countries of the ITU-FAO review on the Status of Digital Agriculture in Europe and Central Asia.

The 28 finalists received the opportunity to present their innovations and outstanding achievements at the "Digital Excellence in Agriculture Awards Ceremony" which took place on 23 September 2021 within the context of the ITU Regional Innovation Forum for Europe. Through this Awards Ceremony, stakeholders discovered how innovative ICT-Based solutions can make financial services more accessible to all stakeholders contributing to the agricultural sector, enhance market access to agriculture products and services, enable capacity development and empowerment, or foster sharing of skills and technical expertise, between others. All of which stimulates agripreneurs to bring novel digital solutions to life.

Technologies, such as connected farm management systems, robots and drones are now more than ever a solution to obsolete and polluting agricultural practices. The Awards Ceremony also provided great examples for stakeholders to implement advanced agriculture innovation systems, which are key to introduce more sustainable farming and spur innovation in the agriculture landscape of Europe and Central Asia. Outcomes of the Wards Ceremony can be found in the Outcome Report of the ITU Innovation Forum available here.

The last phase of the contest, which consist of launching the ITU-FAO "Digital Excellence in Agriculture Report", will be held on 15 December 2021 within the framework of Digital Transformation Forum hosted by the Government of Ukraine. This report focuses on the 28 finalists practices of the contest. It provides a set of scalable, innovative solutions to support practitioners, small and large farm holders, and all stakeholders and partners who are transitioning to digital technologies and digital processes. In addition, the report provides an analysis of current technological trends identified through the contest and the use of such digital solutions across the agricultural sector.

6.2.2 Technical Assistance to Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Turkey in the development of the Digital Agriculture Strategies

Building upon the outcomes of the „ITU-FAO study on the Status of Digital Agriculture in 18 countries of Europe and Central Asia" ITU continues supportting FAO in providing technical assistance to Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Turkey.

6.2.3 Development of the Guide for EU Accession Countries on the Digital Agriculture Development

With the aim of acceleration of the implementation of digital agriculture and providing support to the EU Accession Countries a special guide has been developed in partnership with FAO and upon consultation with the European Commission. Upon finalization the Guide will be launched in Q4/2021 to provide necessary foundation for the technical assistance to be provided to the countries in need, facilitating their process of alignment of the national policies, strategies and regulations with the EU standards.

6.2.4 Digital Transformation based on ICT Innovations for the Development of the Digital Economy, 15 December 2021, Hybrid (Kiev, Ukraine and Online)
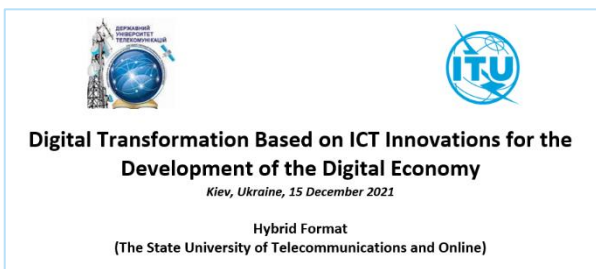
In collaboration with the State University of Telecommunications of Ukraine, the ITU Office for Europe will hold a seminar on Digital transformation based on ICT innovations for the development of the digital economy. Event will be organized in a hybrid and will benefit from English-Russian-Ukrainian interpretation.

Event will offer an opportunity to discuss the following topics: «The digital transformation wheel: Towards accelerated digital development», «The Development of modern infocommunication technologies and its influence on digital transformation of the state», «Standardizations of fiber-optic cables in ITU», «Perspectives for the implementation of IoT devices in the information infrastructure and the impact of IoT on the development of the country's digital economy», «Innovative transformation for the development of the digital economy», «Cybersecurity in the digital transformation era». A special component of the event will provide an opportunity to learn about the activities of UN agencies in the region. Meeting is mainly targeting the audience of Ukraine, but is also open to all countries of the Europe region. More information is available at www.itu.int/go/europe

6.2.5 m-Health Knowledge and Innovation Hub for Europe (ITU-WHO- Andalusian Public Health Service (SSPA/FPS) – Project funded by European Union

mHealth Innovation and Knowledge Hub is a project funded by the European Union ("EU") through the Horizon 2020 program, with a total funding of 3 million Euros. The European m-Health Hub is intended to serve as a mechanism to share success in mHealth across the European region and boost uptake of mHealth solutions amongst national governments. At a high level, the mHealth Hub will provide services in areas of operational research, training and education, identifying standards,

regulatory and policy goals, and implementation support. It will have a dual focus on knowledge management & innovation, and on practical implementation.

Andalusian Public Health Service (SSPA/FPS) has been identified as the stakeholder in charge of establishment and management of the Hub. The Consortium consists of 20 partners from 12 EU countries, representing both the public and private sector. Implementation of the European mHealth Knowledge and Innovation Hub began in February 2020.

A series of activities have been carried out since February 2020. The first face-to-face workshop to kick off Hub activities took place at the ITU HQ in Geneva between 17-19 February. The Hub's website and Social Media Channels were established and a series of outreach activities have been carried out and synergies with existing operations frameworks have been launched, including EC, eHealth Network, eHAction, CEN/ISO, Technical lab & others. Mechanisms for attracting additional funds have been defined. Special efforts were dedicated to engage countries.
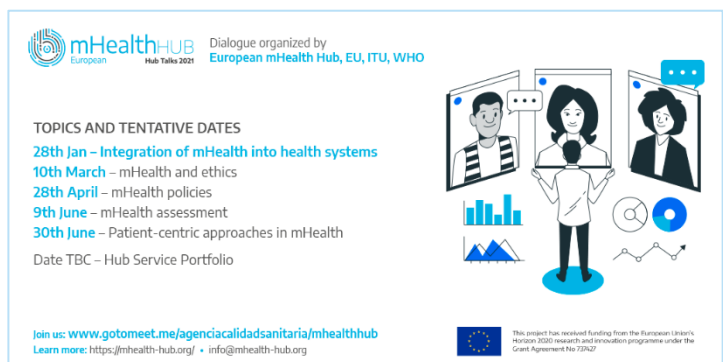
In March 2020, a special call for the expression of interest was sent out to countries inviting Member States, regional authorities and public health organizations to take an active role in the operationalization of the Hub and become a catalyst for the deployment of mobile digital health innovations in European countries and beyond. Expressions of interest from 10 countries have been received, including the following: Iceland, Montenegro, Poland, North Macedonia, Czech Republic, Turkey, Croatia, Spain, Moldova, Norway. The implementation support work and collaboration with these countries is channelled to achieve the Hub objectives aligned to COVID-19 goals.

The Hub has received the expressions of commitment on engagement from the following countries: Hungary, Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Austria and Turkey. Other countries that have shown an interest in engaging include Croatia and Poland. In the context of the integration of mHealth into health systems, a series of national or regional initiatives have been gathered from the Czech Republic, Croatia, Hungary, Italy, Montenegro, Norway, Portugal, Spain and Sweden. In the context of COVID-19 a compilation of public and private initiatives in Europe using digital and mobile applications has been established.

Last 28th January, the European Innovation and Knowledge mHealth Hub launched the series **Hub Talks 2021, a dialogue organised together with WHO, ITU and the European Commission**, to discuss on different mHealth aspects.

This first webinar focussed on the **integration of mHealth into health systems**, with the participation of experts from different countries, like Estonia, Germany and Austria,

that shared diverse experiences. The event was well received by the public and more than 90 people attended and participated in the discussion generated.

Few Technical Papers providing an overview at country level on Policies related to mHealth have been produced as a result of fast tracking approach taken in response to COVID-19.

> "Case Study: Overview of mHealth Policies in Portugal"
> "Case Study: Overview of Policies in Enabling Digital Health in Austria"
> "Case Study: Overview of mHealth Policies in Italy"

In 2021 the Hub continues to offer:

- Knowledge library of success factors, initiatives, solutions and evaluation evidence
- Networking resources
- Expertise resources in the form of Personalised advice and consultancy, recommendations and assessments on key mHealth aspects or Training courses offered by Hub experts
- Catalogues of Health solution suppliers, testimonies, B2B and B2C connections

The Hub Consortium invites Member States, regional authorities, institutions or public health organizations to:

- Take an active role in the operationalization of the Hub and become a catalyst for the deployment of mobile digital health innovations in European countries and beyond.
- Collaborate with the Hub to support countries and regions in setting up large-scale mHealth programs.
- Replicate these collaboration models to support other countries and regions in the future.
- Bring in interested parties who wish to contribute to the capacity building and the operationalization of the Hub.
- Share with us any experiences related to the development and adoption of large scale national mHealth programs.

More information is available on the project's webpage.

6.2.6   Digital Transformation and digitalization of government services for the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals: GovStack: Initiative by ITU, Estonia, Germany and DIAL

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU), together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Estonia (MFA Estonia), the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development of the Federal Republic of Germany (BMZ), and the Digital Impact Alliance (DIAL) at the UN Foundation are collaborating to accelerate digital transformation and

digitalization of government services for the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) particularly in low-resource settings. The collaboration aims at establishing a global high-level framework for digital government cooperation to assist countries in learning and implementing scalable digital services and applications in a cost efficient, accelerated and integrated manner and that are built applying best software development principles and best countries' experiences and practices.

A related project between ITU and Estonia and with a value of 400'000 Euros was signed in December 2020 and project kicked off in January. It complements other works of the consortium financed by Germany and DIAL.

In 2021, the necessary steps have been undertaken towards the development of a "Reference Digital Government Platform" as a "Digital Public Good" based on reusable, standards-based, secure and interoperable building blocks available to the whole-of-Government agencies to build and deploy their digital services and applications. This will reduce the time and effort needed to introduce new digital services and will allow digital services to be scale up and upgraded in a more agile and cost-effective manner. This will facilitate also delivering solutions that best meet citizens' needs who expect to have a seamless, consistent and connected experience across the spectrum of government digital services wherever they are and regardless of their income or literacy levels.

The collaboration implements the following steps:

- Development of Building Blocks (e.g., Identification/authentication, registries, security, information exchange, payments services, etc.) requirements based on selected SDG Use Cases and common experiences across countries
- Development of a Blueprint of a "Digital Government Platform Reference Implementation"
- Implement a "Digital Government Platform Reference implementation Proof-of-Concept (PoC)"
- Leveraging of the Reference Implementation for learning and possible country replication and adoption
- Expansion of the Reference Implementation to include additional Building Blocks and to be self-sustainable.

Recently a special strategy workshop was held in Geneva with an intention of designing next operational steps towards successful scale up of the project at the European level and beyond. It incorporated also the prospect for generation of new projects focusing on particular thematic areas like Green Govstack, or subregional implementations, like in Horn of Africa.

More information is available on the project's webpage.

6.2.7 Special sessions on "GOVSTACK: Scalable e-Government Solutions for Developing countries" within the framework of WSIS Forum 2021 (19 May) and ITU Emerging Technologies Week, (5 July)

Digital government services are vital for developing a digital economy that benefits all citizens by expanding access to critical services such as health, education and social protection. Countries seeking to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the next ten years are increasingly looking to national digital strategies and agendas to transform the way they do business and improve the lives of their citizens.

A "Whole-of-Government" platform approach to developing government services through the reuse and minimal customization of quick and easy to adopt building blocks is at the heart of the success of digital government services projects. Open-source models for a government platform that is built from modular and reusable components, leveraging a secure and standards-based approach, are an optimal solution to solving these issues in a cost-efficient and scalable manner.

Special sessions on "GOVSTACK: Scalable e-Government Solutions for Developing countries" were held within the framework of WSIS Forum 2021 (19 May) and ITU Emerging Technologies Week, (5 July).

These sessions provided a stage to gather, present and discuss best practices in this area and discuss the main challenges to implementation in Europe, and beyond, including Developing countries, LDCs, SIDs and LLDCs.

6.2.8 E-waste: Regional E-waste Monitor for the Western Balkans (ITU-UNEP-UNITAR)

E-waste constitutes one of the fastest growing streams of physical waste in today's global environment and a threat to sustainable development. Data and comparable overviews on e-waste are essential in all stages of the policy cycle, to evaluate developments over time, to elaborate national and international policies and to limit e-waste generation, to prevent illegal dumping, to promote recycling, and to create jobs in the recycling sectors.

However, only a very limited number of countries collect internationally comparable e-waste statistics and comparable overviews on e-waste management at the regional and national level. Within the framework of the Global E-waste Statistics Partnership, this project aims to make an assessment of e-waste statistics, e-waste management practices and the e-waste legislation landscape in the beneficiary countries to produce the Regional E-waste Monitor report for the Western Balkans.

The project will be jointly implemented by UNEP Europe Office, UNEP Vienna Office and ITU, in close cooperation with UNITAR-SCYCLE and with the respective governments and statistical offices of the participating countries, i.e. Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia.

6.3   EUR3: Accessibility, affordability and skills development for all to ensure digital inclusion and sustainable development

Digital Accessibility

6.3.1   How to ensure inclusive digital communication during crises and emergency situations (on-line self-paced training), 1 January to 31 December 2021

This self-paced online course on inclusive digital communication during crises and emergency situations has been developed in response to the recent COVID-19 pandemic. It is in line with, and in support to the UN Secretary General Policy on Disability Inclusion and the BDT work in ICT/digital accessibility to ensure digital inclusion. It comprises one module and aims to provide direction and practical guidance on how to develop and deliver inclusive digital communication during times of crisis or emergency. This course is an introduction to inclusive digital communication. It highlights the importance of delivering accessible digital information and communication across a range of digital platforms, and in multiple formats. It focuses on the importance of incorporating ICT accessibility when developing contingency and national emergency telecommunication plans at local, regional, and national levels. ICT accessibility not only addresses the needs of persons with disabilities, but it also ensures vital information and communication can be accessed, understood, and used other persons including those with specific needs, older citizens, women, girls, refugees, and migrants. It is estimated this course will take approximately one and a half hours (1.5hrs) to complete.

A completion certificate will be awarded by the ITU Academy upon successful validation of the learner's knowledge. Target audience This course is recommended for all personnel working in public communications. It is also recommended for personnel who are called upon to provide emergency information. Goals The goal of this knowledge resource is to strengthen ITU Members and stakeholder's capacity on the topic of inclusive digital communication. This resource also aims to build capacity in terms of ensuring vital information, products and services are developed and delivered in

accessible and multiple formats. This will ensure the inclusion of all persons, including those with disabilities.

More information: https://academy.itu.int/index.php/training-courses/full-catalogue/how-ensure-inclusive-digital-communication-during-crises-and-emergency-situations

6.3.2 Web Accessibility - The cornerstone of digital society (on-line self-paced training), 1 January to 31 December 2021

This on-line certificate based self-paced training course, Web Accessibility: The cornerstone of an Inclusive Digital Society is composed of 3 modules: - Module 1: Executive tools for developing a web accessibility policy - Module 2: Essentials of implementing a web accessibility evaluation - Module 3: Technical skills for designing and developing accessible websites. The learner will develop an overall understanding of the main issues relating to web accessibility, including web accessibility policy development, the creation of accessible digital content, the evaluation of level of accessibility of the websites, principles related to the design and development of accessible websites and maintenance of accessible websites, in line with the international standards related to web accessibility.

More information: https://academy.itu.int/training-courses/full-catalogue/web-accessibility-cornerstone-digital-societyon-line-self-paced-training

6.3.3 ICT Accessibility: the key to inclusive communication (on-line self-paced training), 1 January to 31 December 2021

This free of charge self-paced course has been designed to be accessible for everyone including by persons with disabilities. To access the course, you should previously register in ITU Academy. The course, estimated to about 8h, provides a holistic knowledge on the topic of ICT accessibility through 3 Modules as follows: 1) Module 1: Enabling communication for all through ICT Accessibility. This module aims to provide learners with an introduction to ICT accessibility for persons with disabilities. It an overview of the global Digital Inclusion policy agenda that requires persons with disabilities can access and use mainstream ICTs on an equal basis with others and are consequently enabled to participate fully in society. It describes the legal, economic and social imperative for making everyday ICTs more accessible and describes many of the main accessibility features available in technology today that benefit persons with disabilities, older people and others. 2) Module 2: ICT Accessibility policy regulations and standards. This module aims to provide learners with a knowledge and understanding of policies and laws from around the world that support ICT accessibility, the role and development of international ICT standards that specify in detail accessibility features and functions for everyday ICTs, and how public procurement is being leveraged to encourage innovation and improve the quality, availability and affordability of accessible ICTs. 3) Module 3: Achieving ICT accessibility through public procurement. This module aims to assist learners specify accessibility for persons with disabilities in the public procurement of everyday ICT products and services such as websites and computers, address accessibility during the main stages of the public procurement process, and to ensure the procured ICTs conform with the required accessibility standards.

The course's modules aim to provide learners with an introduction to ICT accessibility, on overview of relevant ICT accessibility standards, regulation and policy and practical advice on the public procurement of accessible ICTs. The successful validation of the knowledge achieved as a result of this course completion led to an ITU certificate.

More information: https://academy.itu.int/training-courses/full-catalogue/ict-accessibility-key-inclusive-communication-line-self-paced-training

6.3.4 Special session on Fostering Digital Innovation Ecosystem for Accessible Europe – part of Zero Project Conference 2021, 10 February 2021

ITU facilitated a Special Session on "Fostering Digital Innovation Ecosystem for Accessible Europe", which was held virtually as a co-conferencing session (Channel 3) of the Zero Project Conference 2021, on 10 February 2021 from 17:00 to 18:00 CET. This session was held within the framework of the Accessible Europe initiative, more precisely its work stream on fostering of the ICT-centric innovation ecosystem and "Regional Competition for Innovative Digital Solutions for an Accessible Europe 2021".

Five European innovators presented their innovative solutions and joined this interactive panel discussion to explore what is needed to further strengthen the ecosystem supporting the development of the ICT accessibility innovations. It also explored and covered the types of issues, solutions and challenges these organizations faced when starting up, adhering to this year's conference theme of ICT & Employment to provide a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced in developing Accessible ICT solutions. This event benefitted from International Sign Language interpretation and live captioning.

More information: https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/Europe/Pages/Events/2021/ZeroCon/Default.aspx

6.3.5 Accessible Europe 2021, 23-25 March 2021

Accessible Europe: ICT for ALL was organized by the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the European Commission, and hosted by the Government of Portugal in the context of the 2021 Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The event took place virtually from 23 – 25 March 2021 and was held within the framework of the ITU European Regional Initiative on "Accessibility, affordability and skills development for all to ensure digital inclusion and sustainable development", adopted by the ITU World Telecommunication Development Conference 2017 (WTDC-17).

Accessible Europe was held virtually, attracted more than 240 registered participants from over 40 countries, representing around 100 organizations from Europe and beyond. Hosted virtually by the Government of Portugal, the event saw over 1600 stakeholders following live streams online and engaging actively with #AccessibleEurope on social media. Almost 50 expert speakers and moderators, sharing the virtual stage across 8 sessions, identified priority actions to advance the ICT accessibility agenda in Europe. A total of 97 individual interventions, ranging from high-level speeches to expert presentations and innovation pitches, contributed to the proceedings. Captioning and interpretation in both International Sign Language and Portuguese Sign Language were provided throughout the entirety of the event.

This event showcased the "ICT Accessibility assessment for the Europe region", which is designed to provide ITU members and stakeholders from the ITU Europe region with a holistic view of ICT accessibility requirements and of the implementation status of ICT accessibility laws, regulations, policies and institutional frameworks across the 46 countries of Europe region. It also serves to provide advice to policy-makers and stakeholders throughout the region in the form of good practices and recommendations.

It was identified that accessibility gaps remain between and within member states of the Europe region, and while COVID-19 did not cause access barriers to digital technologies, it has served to exacerbate them. For example, countries with higher accessibility standards were better equipped to enable all—regardless of ability levels—to continue activities in the transition to telework and distanced education necessitated by the pandemic. It has now become urgent for governments, civil societies, multilateral agencies, and private sector partners to work in unison towards the full accessibility of all areas of the digital world—from e-Governance services to the private sector and online enterprises—thus harnessing the digital transformation and the enabling power of ICTs toward a more equal, just, and secure future for all.

Concrete initiatives and good practices were shared in ensuring accessibility for individuals, schools, private-sector enterprises, and public-sector administrations. Speakers called for establishing multistakeholder strategies that are translated into action and the creation of long-term, sustainable solutions to achieve fully accessible digital services and opportunities for every individual, regardless of different abilities.

More information: https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/Europe/Pages/Events/2020/AE21/default.aspx

6.3.6 The Regional Competition for Innovative Digital Solutions for Accessible Europe

ITU has held the third edition of the Regional Competition for Innovative Digital Solutions for Accessible Europe. This competition aimed to promote innovative and creative digital solutions to benefit persons with disabilities (PwD), bringing more social inclusion and interaction, comfort, and quality of life to their daily routine through mobile technologies.

The competition sought solutions from individuals and teams across the private, public, non-profit and academic sectors that addressed the needs of persons with vision, hearing, speech, cognitive and physical disabilities. In particular, the competition expected new concepts of digital applications or interfaces designed to remove barriers, helping PwDs live a more independent life, participate in cultural events or political processes, benefit from education or entertainment, or obtain a job.

The Regional Competition for Innovative Digital Solutions for Accessible Europe promotes the goals and objectives of ITU, as well as Sustainable Development Goals, in the specific context of Europe. The competition aims at fostering the research and development of new digital solutions which seek to bring more social inclusion and interaction as well as comfort and quality of life to the daily routine of persons with disabilities, in line with SDG 10 (reduced inequality). Simultaneously, it aims at fostering the innovation ecosystem with a focus on ICT Accessibility, in line with SDG 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure).

As a result of the Call for Competition, ITU received **97 submissions from 29 different countries** in the Region. The solutions were reviewed by an independent Evaluation Committee composed of experts from European disability associations and ICT Accessibility experts who responded to our open Call for Evaluators. Evaluators gathered on 24 February 2021 through a virtual meeting where they spent time working to identify finalists and winners of the competition.

The nominated finalists for the five categories are the following:

- Persons who are deaf or hard of hearing: Visualfy (winner), SignLab, and World in Sign EU GmbH
- Persons with visual impairment: RemmedVR (winner), Project Ray and Feelif
- Persons with speech impairment: Voiceitt (winner), APP-SEC-NETWORK and Pictogram
- Persons with cognitive and intellectual disabilities: Tu Dortmund University (winner), Capito App and Claro Software
- Persons with physical disabilities: Magicview (winner), Travaxy and Lifetool

Nominated candidates were invited to participate in Accessible Europe, where their pitching presentations took place on 23 March 2021, followed by an Award Ceremony announcing winners and runner-ups for each category before an audience comprising a wide range of experts and interested stakeholders.

The winners were announced by members of the Evaluation Committee. Visualfy won Category 1, REMEDVR was declared winner in Category 2, VoiceItt won in Category 3, whereas Easy Reading and Magic View were winners in Categories 4 and 5, respectively. The winners receive special recognition of Accessible Europe by ITU for their achievements. They will be included in the ITU Smart Incubator's capacity building program, becoming active participants in the policy discourse, standardization, and programming processes of ITU. Moreover, all finalists, providing innovative digital solutions for Accessible Europe, will benefit from the Curation Programme, where ITU and its partner will actively promoting and connect innovators to its network.

More information: https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/Europe/Pages/Events/2020/AE21/Regional-Competition.aspx

6.3.7 Curation Programme for Accessible Europe Innovators

ITU is joining forces with the Zero Project of the Essl Foundation, in order to launch an initiative, which aims to build a supportive ecosystem for digital innovation in accessibility and to strengthen a special digital centric innovation ecosystem for Accessible Europe. Through this initiative, ITU and the Zero

Project will work closely with start-ups and SMEs, and other relevant stakeholders to enhance regional cooperation in Europe, and engagement in the innovation ecosystem for Accessible Europe, including develop and disseminate knowledge on ICT accessibility innovations. Activities has taken and will take place under this partnership are the following:

1. **Open consultation webinar**

As the first step of this initiative, ITU and Essl Foundation held an open consultation webinar, which was held virtually on Monday, May 10, 2021, with select innovators from the Regional Competition for Accessible Europe and select Zero Project Awardees.

On this occasion both organizations sought to gather information and better understand the current needs of innovators, thus, directly informing, designing, and inspiring the initiative's key activities and formats. As a result, the initiative aims to offer a direct added value—by and for—accessibility entrepreneurs in Europe.

2. **SME Online Masterclass: How to design for disability inclusion**

ITU Office for Europe and the Zero Project co-organized an SME Online Masterclass on "**How to design for disability inclusion",** which was held virtually as part of the SME Programme of ITU Digital World 2021, on **Thursday, 10 June 2021 from 14:00-15:00 CEST.** This session was held within the framework of the Regional Initiative for Europe on "Accessibility, affordability and skills development for all to ensure digital inclusion and sustainable development" and the Accessible Europe initiative, more precisely its workstream on fostering the ICT-centric innovation ecosystem.

Companies that embrace Inclusive designed products and services with diverse users in mind reach a more significant number of the intended audience and outperform their peers. Globally, more than one billion people, or 15% of the world population, experience some forms of disability, representing a significant portion of untapped resources due to design exclusion. This 60-minute training session explored why businesses should invest in accessibility, the potential return of having an inclusive design in mind, and practical advice on how and where to start the journey of inclusive design.

More information: https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/Europe/Pages/Events/2021/Masterclass/Default.aspx

3. Home office and the new elevated importance to build flexible work environments that facilitate PwDs socio-economic inclusion – as side event of 14th Conference of States Parties to the CRPD

ITU Office for Europe and the Zero Project co-facilitated a **Special Session** on "**Home office and the new elevated importance to build flexible work environments that facilitate PwDs socio-economic inclusion",** which was held virtually as a side event of [the 14th Conference of States Parties to the CRPD – COSP14](), on **Friday, 18 June 2021 from 16:00-17:15**

CEST (10:00-11:15 EST). This session was held within the framework of the [Accessible Europe]() initiative, more precisely its workstream on fostering the ICT centric innovation ecosystem.

The global pandemic has elevated the importance of remote work and work from home as a normal practice that will enable everyone including persons with disabilities to have access to job opportunities using their home office. In effect, we must ensure that this new focus also creates a working environment that encourages people to be themselves and reach their full potential. People can perform their best if they work in an environment that is instinctively inclusive.

Our partners from Austria, Spain, and Switzerland outlined best practices when it comes to ensuring that built environments allow all people to fully participate in the digital benefits of tomorrow. Based on the COVID-19 experience, our partners' works in ICT accessibility reiterate the need of policymakers from public and private sectors to develop inclusive policies and strategies that support and facilitate remote work (working from home) opportunities, which will expand the opportunities for persons with disabilities to the job market, and thus, promote their independent lives and socio-economic development.

More information: https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/Europe/Pages/Events/2021/COSP14/Default.aspx

4. Accelerating Digital Inclusion in New Normal – as part of Global Innovation Forum for Europe 2021 (*forthcoming*)

ITU Office for Europe and the Zero Project will co-facilitate a Special Session on "*Accelerating Digital Inclusion in New Normal*", which will be held virtually on 23 September 2021 as part of the Global Innovation Forum for Europe 2021.

More information: https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/Europe/Pages/Events/2021/RIF/Default.aspx

6.3.8 Regional Assessment of Enabling Environments Ensuring Accessible ICT for Persons with Disabilities in the Europe Region

The ITU Office for Europe has been carrying out a regional assessment of enabling environments ensuring accessible telecommunications and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) for Persons with Disabilities in the Europe Region consisting of 46 countries. The assessment is designed to provide ITU members and stakeholders from the European region with a holistic vision regarding the current implementation status on ICT accessibility laws, regulations, policies and strategies. ITU also intends to provide advice to policy makers and stakeholders throughout the region through good practices and recommendations, and support ITU members' efforts in ensuring that information and communications, as well as ICT products and services, are available and accessible to all citizens without any discriminations of gender age or abilities, so including to persons with disabilities.

The assessment is an important part of the implementation of the ITU Regional Initiative on "accessibility, affordability and skills development for all to ensure digital inclusion and sustainable development". In particular, it will contribute to the Accessible Europe initiative, Connect 2030 Agenda, and the ITU strategic goal number 2, target 2.9, calling on Member States to establish accessible ICT environments for persons with disabilities in all Member States by 2023.

Additionally, the assessment is fully in line with the requirements for the transposition of the European Union (EU) legislation regarding disability inclusion as indicated in the European Accessibility Act and other Directives that deal with ICT accessibility, and aims at facilitating ITU Members' understanding of the related requirements and fulfilment with the deadlines.

The outcome of the assessment is used as a background document for Accessible Europe 2021, a regional needs assessment and tool for directing targeted technical assistance to the countries in need, as well as an input document to discussions on ICT Accessibility under the EU Presidencies 2021 and a preparatory process leading towards the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-21).

ITU Office for Europe would like to thank Members States that provided inputs for the assessment of ICT accessibility for persons with disabilities in their respective countries. Report was launched on the occasion of the Accessible Europe on 23 March 2021.

Download the report: https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/Europe/Documents/Events/2020/AE20/event/D-PHCB-ICT_ACCESS_EUR.01-2021-PDF-E.pdfink

More information: https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/Europe/Pages/Events/2020/AE21/Regional-Assessment.aspx

6.3.9 Technical Assistance on ICT Accessibility Policy Review of the Republic of Serbia
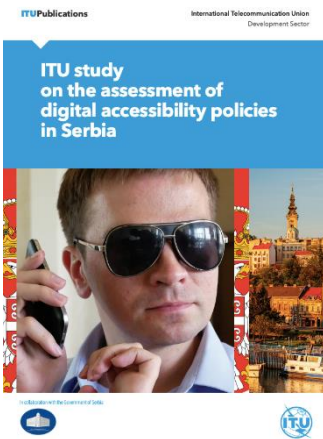
The lack of accessibility in any forms of digital technology prevents persons with disabilities from accessing critical information affecting their health, security, and social protection as well as social and economic activities. The trend becomes worse when the COVID-19 pandemic has created a new working and educational and socializing culture whereby people utilize online conference tools, and many online platforms remain inaccessible for persons with disabilities, including those who need accurate real time captioning, such as persons who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Ensuring accessibility benefits not only persons with disabilities but also older persons who might not be adept at utilizing ICT, and those whose native language are not language used in the country and areas they live in. The design approach supporting this idea is universal design. Therefore, the COVID-19 pandemic made it all the more evident that the ICT must be accessible and, to achieve this goal, Governments shall include ICT accessibility considerations in their laws, policies, regulations, strategies, and standards as the key enabler to guarantee equal and equitable access to public information and services.

In this context ITU provided technical assistance on the Assessment of Digital Accessibility Policies of the Republic of Serbia. Assistance consisted of several phases, including desktop research, series of interviews with key national stakeholders, a series of consultations and legal reviews, and others.
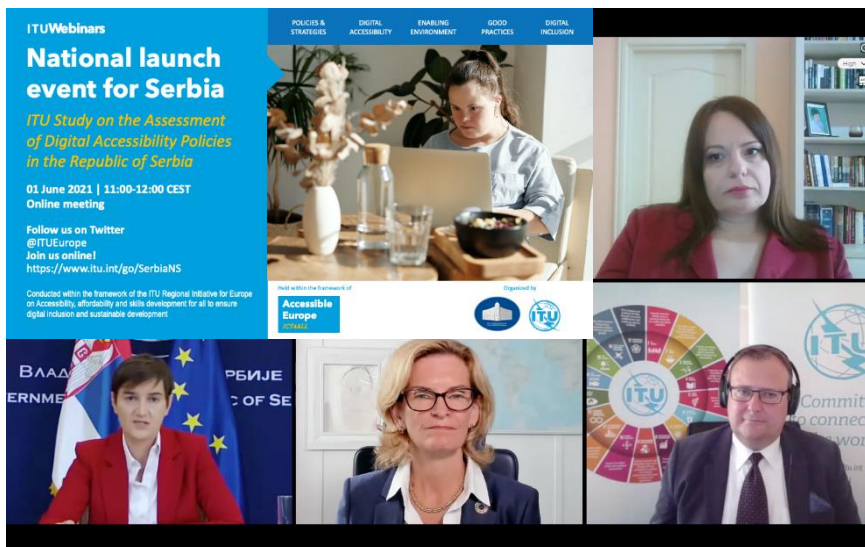
A national launch event presenting results of review has concluded the exercise paving the way for the development of the national strategy and plan of action. The launch event aimed to disseminate the main findings of the assessment and raise awareness at national level with regards to the importance of ICT accessibility and disability inclusion. It

showcased the joint-work undertaken over the past five (5) months to provide an updated overview on the status of ICT Accessibility and Digital Inclusion in Serbia, along with a set of good practices and recommendations for national policymakers and stakeholders on how to ensure the inclusiveness perspective is taken into account in several key domains. Final report has been officially handed over to the Prime Minister Office of Republic of Serbia on 01 June 2021.

Download the report: https://www.itu.int/dms_pub/itu-d/opb/phcb/D-PHCB-ICT_ACCESS_SRB.01-2021-PDF-E.pdf

More information: https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/Europe/Pages/Events/2021/SNS/Default.aspx

## 6.3.10 ICT Accessibility Policy Review of the Republic of Lithuania (forthcoming)

The development of the National Assessment of the ICT Accessibility in Lithuania is planned for Q4 2021. Particular focus will be dedicated to the focus on the role of the National Regulatory Authority in creating enabling environment facilitating the development of digital accessibility.

Gender Equality

6.3.11 Gendered Digital Divide "Digitally Empowered Generation Equality in the wake of COVID-19", 9 March 2021
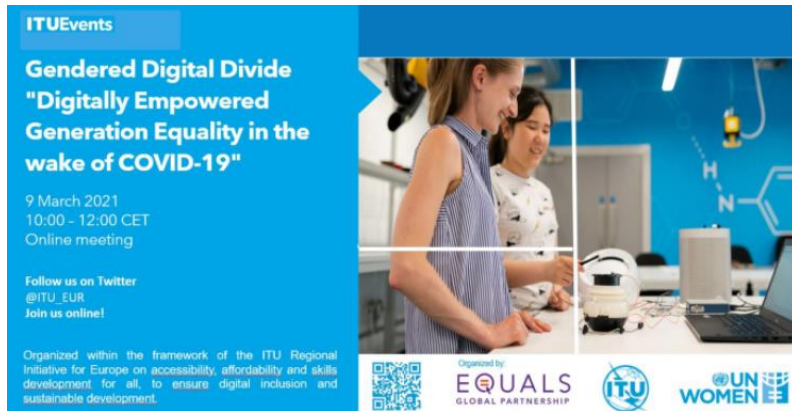
The special session "Gendered digital divide: Digitally Empowered Generation Equality in the wake of COVID-19" was organized by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (UN Women) and EQUALS. This event took place virtually on 9 March 2021 from 10:00 – 12:00 CET and it was held within the framework of the 2021 UN Regional Forum for Sustainable Development for UNECE Region and the ITU Regional Forum for Europe on Meaningful Connectivity (8-9 March 2021). This session focused on solutions and best practices to address the root causes of the gendered digital divide. The session also provided an overview of the current ecosystem when it comes to Women, Girls, and ICT in the context of COVID-19 in selected countries of the ITU Europe region. The session provided an opportunity for the representatives of UN agencies (ITU, UN Women) and partners to highlight a series of key actions, activities, initiatives, and partnerships that address the gendered digital divide.

The ITU and UN Women Digitally Empowered Generation Equality Report was launched and inform the planned discussions at this session. The Executive Summary - Report on "Digitally Empowered Generation Equality" is available. Full version of the report is available here. This session targeted several SDGs, namely: SDG 1 "No poverty", SDG 4 "Quality education", SDG 5 "Gender Equality", SDG 8 "Decent work and Economic growth", SDG 10 "Reduced inequalities", and SDG 17 "Partnerships for the goals". All the report's recommendations can be found in this infographics.

6.3.12 Network of Women – Europe

The Network of Women (NoW) was created to encourage gender balance in the activities leading up to the World Telecommunication Development Conference, WTDC-21, scheduled to take place from 8 to 19 November 2021 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.


Network of Women (NoW)
A forum for networking, knowledge sharing and mentoring

The first Network of Women (NoW) for Europe meeting was launched on 19 January 2021 at the Regional Preparatory Meeting for WTDC-21 for Europe (RPM-EUR).

The Network's vision is to provide a neutral platform for exchange of information between new and experienced female delegates, as well as for advice and support from women who have successfully ascended to leadership positions in ITU-D. NoW Europe is own and led by ITU-D women delegates with the support of the ITU-D.

The Network's Objectives to:

- build, in the medium and long term, a community where female delegates support each other, expand their network, advocate and share experience and knowledge;
- promote the active participation of women in the activities of ITU-D and the development sector in general;
- give visibility to women and empower them for larger responsibilities in their respective delegations, at WTDC-21 and in future similar platforms;
- encourage experienced female delegates to mentor ICT professionals in order to create a stronger base for women in the digital space.

ITU Office for Europe, will continue to provide operational support to the activities carried out by the network of women in order to ensure vibrant implementation of this platform while seeking synergies with the actions carried out under the ITU Regional Initiative for Europe related to Gender Equality.

On 5 May 2021 (13:00 – 14:00 CEST) the Network of Women (NoW) Europe held a virtual Get Together at the CEPT COM-ITU meeting where it discussed next steps as well as reflected on the Girls in ICT Day 10 year anniversary celebration that took place on 22 April 2021. The event was an opportunity for NoW national networks to share their experiences and raise awareness on the importance of women

leadership and girls empowerement in the ICTs. Several national NoW's organized Get Togethers in the month of April 2021 in celebration of the Girls in ICT Day 10 year anniversary.

On 28 May 2021, the NoW for Europe presented their achievements and activities at TDAG.

On 4 June 2021 (10:00 – 12:00 CEST) the Network of Women (NoW) for Europe organized a virtual leadership training for all NoW Europe women. The training was attended by more than 40 participants and was well received.
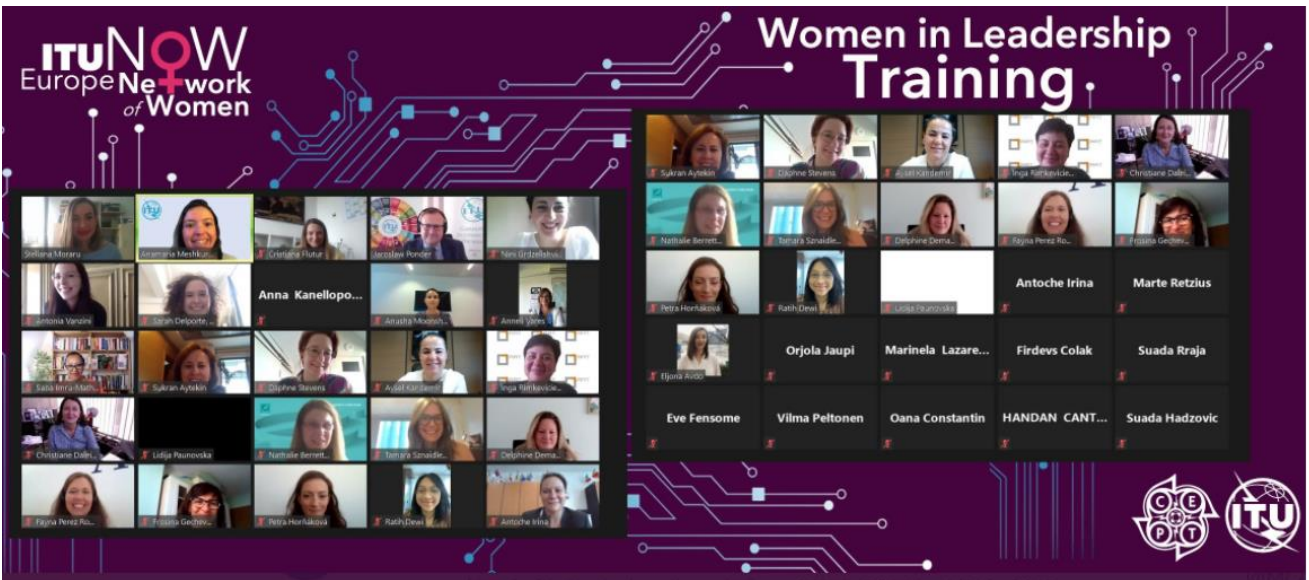

A second training was organized on 9 September 2021 and attended by more than 20 participants. The training focused on Impact and Influence and helped members of the NoW for Europe to leverage

further on the power of impact through networking and influencing, with other fellow women delegates. Additional trainings and fireside discussions are planned for the network.
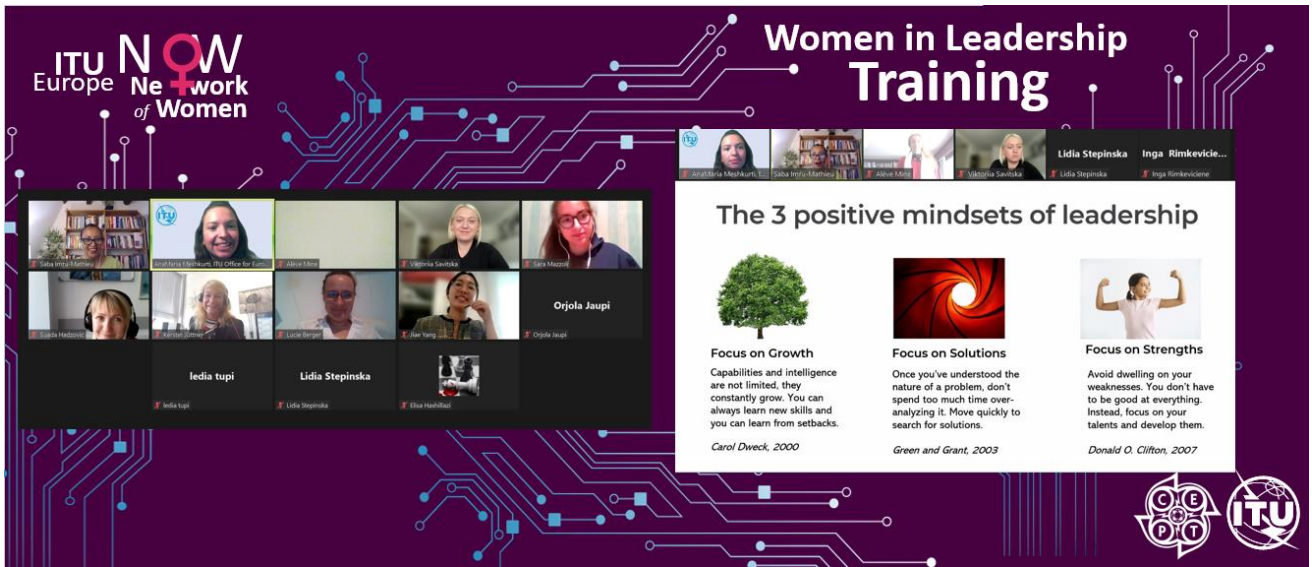
An invitation-only luncheon with women ambassadors in Geneva, powered by the Network of Women for Europe was organized on 6 October 2021, establishing the community of Ambassadors interested in .

On 19 October 2021, ITU Office for Europe was pleased to organize the first Fireside Chat for the Network of Women 4WTDC. More than 100 women participants attended and shared expertise and stories.

6.3.13 Girls in ICT Celebration

International Girls in ICT Day 2021 was observed on 22 April 2021. The ITU "European celebration of Girls in ICT 10-year anniversary" was organized by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and EQUALS-EU, with the support of UN Women and CEPT and included high level messaged from the European Commission (EC) and Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) and Generation Connect Europe Youth Group. It was held within the framework of the ITU Girls in ICT day initiative, which aims to empower girls and young women through ICTs, as well as the ITU regional initiative for Europe on accessibility, affordability and skills development for all to ensure digital inclusion and sustainable development. This virtual celebration was held on 22 April 2021 from 13:30 - 15:30 CEST.

The virtual event was followed and viewed by over **1500 individuals** and supported with captioning. The full event webpage can be accessed here. The agenda for this special event can be accessed here, and the recorded live stream is available here. In the course of the event, more than 25 individuals submitted their contributions to a **video campaign** giving advice to their 10-year-old selves, which can be accessed here.

It was identified that a significant gender gap for women and girls assuming roles and pursuing education in the ICT field is still pervasive. Perspectives gained by girls throughout their stages of growth and development from family and education institutions could assist or deter them from pursuing studies and careers in STEM.

Throughout the event, a call for building supportive communities for women and girls who are already in and want to enter the ICT field resonated among speakers. The support from the ICT community is an important starting place where young girls can learn about technologies and gain a broader perspective on ICTs and their impact on society. Having role models and seeing directly that more girls are pursuing careers in STEM and joining local ICT communities is highly motivating for other girls to start education or careers in technologies.

All Member States, Sector Members, Associates, Academia and other stakeholders joined the global movement to empower girls and young women through ICTs by organizing activities to celebrate the day on and around 22 April 2021 as seen from the map of Europe, where all countries highlighted in blue organized one or more activities to celebrate this important day for women and girls. A full report of activities that took place in the Europe region can be found in the Girls in ICT Day 2021: Selection of activities in Europe report.

Over the years, Girls in ICT Day was celebrated in more than 170 countries with over 11,000 events worldwide by engaging key stakeholders and partners to inspire girls in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) careers through trainings, information sharing, capacity building activities and role models. Adolescent girls with job-specific skills related to STEM – such as engineering, computer programming, cloud technology, robotics, health sciences and technologies – are better equipped to equally and actively participate in changing economies and evolving labour markets. Currently, traditional employment sectors are declining in response to automation, while innovation opens new ones demanding different skills. Without STEM skills – critical thinking, problem-solving and digital skills– girls and women will be further left behind from equal economic and social participation.

More information on the Girls in ICT initiative see here: https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Digital-Inclusion/Women-and-Girls/Girls-in-ICT-Portal/Pages/GirlsInICTDay/2021/GICT-2021.aspx

Digital Skills

6.3.14 ITU Regional Forum for Europe on Digital Skills Development, 16 March 2021

The ITU Regional Forum for Europe on Digital Skills Development was held within the framework of the ITU Regional Initiative for Europe on "Accessibility, affordability and skills development for all to ensure digital inclusion and sustainable development". This one-day event was held on 16 March 2021 and is organized by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

As the transformative role of digital technologies becomes mainstream in an increasing number of sectors, its advancements have resulted in an important change in the capacities and skills of the workforce required today. The current pandemic has played a key role in accelerating the need for prioritizing digital policy, which is no longer a concern to be deferred to the future.

In this context, the Forum provided a platform for all stakeholders to actively exchange their approaches related to fostering digital skills development, with the objective to strengthen regional and national mechanisms. It also offered an opportunity to the countries participating to present progress made so far and exchange their national practices. The forum was an opportunity to reach out to other stakeholders and inspire them to undertake concrete actions on fostering digital skills development. The forum was addressed to representatives of ministries, regulators, digital skills development entities, telecom operators, academia, R&D institutes and other interested stakeholders of the ITU Member States, Sector Members and Associates from Europe.

6.3.15 Regional Assessment of the National Approaches towards Digital Skills Development

With the aim of identifying gaps and areas of intervention at the national level, a regional macro assessment of the national approaches for digital skills development is being carried out in nine countries, including Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine. The assessment builds upon the framework of the ITU Digital Skills Assessment Guidebook and should lead to country assistance in 2021. Selected countries will undergo the process of a fully-fledged national digital skills assessment, and followed by a national digital skills strategy.

6.3.16 Technical Assistance on Development of the National Strategy on Digital Skills Development in Albania

Upon request by the country, ITU has launched the Digital Skills Assessment technical assistance leading towards the development of the national strategy on digital skills development. The six months process will consist of several phases, including series of interviews, national workshops,

assessments, public queries, others. The assessment will focus on the private sector, academia and general public. The assessment is foreseen to be completed in November.

6.3.17 Technical assistance on Development of the National Strategy on Digital skills Development in North Macedonia and Ukraine

Upon request of the country, ITU has launched the Digital Skills Assessment technical assistance. The outcomes of the initiative will contribute to the development of a national digital skills strategy. The programme will include a national assessment, a series of interviews, workshops, and others. The assessment will focus on reviewing and evaluating digital skills in the private sector, academia, and the general public. It will result in a series of recommendations and suggestions to be considered during the further development of the digital strategy. The assessment is foreseen to be finalized in February 2022. Upon request by the country, ITU has launch technical assistance leading towards the development of the national strategy on digital skills development. The process consists of two stages: stage one currently ongoing includes the creation of a Digital Skills Case study roadbook for Ukraine and stage two consists of a digital skills assessment based on the outcomes of stage one. The first stage is foreseen to be concluded in November.

6.3.18 Generation Connect – Europe Youth Group

The ITU Youth Strategy aims to improve and have a real impact on the lives of young people around the world, and to ensure meaningful participation of youth in ITU as key stakeholders in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In line with the ITU Youth Strategy and within the framework of the "Generation Connect" global initiative, European Youth were called upon to contribute to the preparatory process for the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-21), in particular the Regional Preparatory Meeting (RPM) for Europe, through the establishment of the **Generation Connect - Europe Youth Group (GC-EUR)**.

Since December 2020, the Members of the Europe Youth Group, consisting of 24 young people aged between 18 and 24, coming from all around Europe, have been working towards the elaboration of a **Youth Declaration,** providing their views on the challenges and opportunities related to digital development and sharing the actions they would like to see happening in regards to the regional priorities of the Europe region, as an input to the RPM for Europe.

The Youth Declaration developed by the group identifies five thematic priorities as primary (capacity development, policy and regulation, cybersecurity, environment, and digital inclusion) while recognizing the importance of several other thematic priorities. Declaration was presented by GC-EUR representatives at the RPM for Europe, held virtually on 18-19 January 2021.

GC-EUR continues its work, providing valuable contributions related to the organization of the WTDC-21 Generation Connect Global Youth Summit to be held on 6-7 November 2021, back to back with WTDC-21, on 8-19 November 2021, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Members of the Group do engage in different meetings, presenting the declaration and advocating for meaningful youth engagement. For instance, four GC-EUR Members spoke at the Regional Forum for Sustainable Development for the UNECE Region-2021:

- Cross-Cutting Session 4-2 on Digitalization (15 March 2021, 10:00-12:30 CET), co-led by ITU and UNECE
- Session 2-2 - The socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on youth (12 March 2021, 10:00-12:00 CET)
- Side event - Gendered digital divide: Digitally Empowered Generation Equality in the wake of COVID-19 (9 March, 10:00-12:00 CET), organized by ITU and UN Women.

Additionally, representatives of the group hosted a Girls in ICT 10 year anniversary celebration and engaged in the ITU "European celebration of Girls in ICT 10-year anniversary" as well as its twitter campaign named "Advice to you 10 year old self".

On 28 April 2021, the group hosted a structure brainstorming session to set the plan of activities and engagements for the months to come leading to WTDC-21. Outcomes of the brainstorming concluded in the creation of activities around the themes of the youth declaration presented earlier in the year.

The group presented the outcomes of their regional brainstorming session at the Generation Connect global Youth roundtable event held on 20 May 2021.
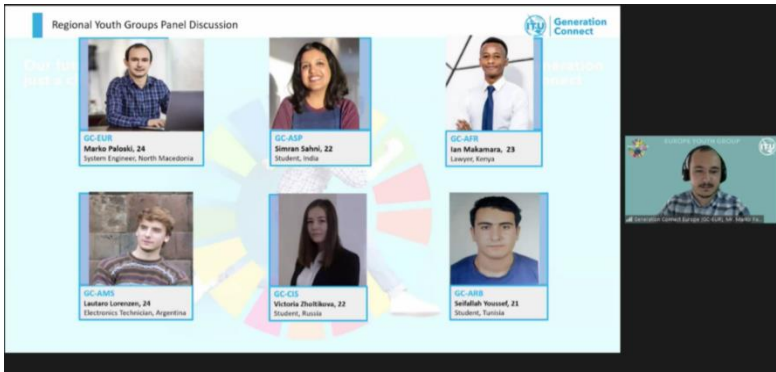
On 25 May 2021, Generation Connect for Europe representative shared at TDAG the activities and achievements of the group.

He was joined by the representative of the Czech Republic who praised the work of the Generation Connect Europe Youth Group and their accomplishments to date.

The group will be working towards the ITU Regional Youth Forum for Europe to be tentatively hosted in December 2021.

The Generation Connect Europe Youth Group has started close collaboration and brainstorming with the Generation Connect Visionaries board and held a meeting on 10 September 2021 with one of their representatives on next steps to strengthen the collaboration between the two groups.

The GC Europe will organize an Innovation Session for Youth as part of the Regional Innovation Forum for Europe 2021 on 23 September 2021 as well as the Digital Youth Jam on 3 December 2021.

More information: https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/Europe/Pages/Projects/GCEUR/About.aspx

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Generation Connect Europe Youth Group (GC-EUR) is organizing the first ever Digital Youth Jam, to be virtually held on 3 December 2021. This event aims to gather European youth leaders and organizations to discuss the GC-EUR Youth Declaration drafted and presented in early 2021 and covering topics such as capacity development, policy and regulation, cybersecurity, environment, and digital inclusion being an integral part of sustainable development; it aims at cooperation, the advancement of knowledge and innovation for social inclusion. The event will be a grassroot platform for European Youth to gather, discuss, learn and network from each other. This event will serve as another step towards the journey of GC-EUR to the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC) to be held in June 2022 as well as the European Year of Youth 2022 as declared by the European Commission. The outcomes of this event will be reported at the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) 2021. More information on the GC-EUR group can be found here.

6.4 EUR4: Enhancing trust and confidence in the use of information and communication technologies

Child Online Protection

6.4.1 Roll-out of the ITU COP Guidelines at the National Level in Europe Region

ITU firstly developed the Guidelines for Child Online Protection (COP) in 2009. Upon request of the Member States, the COP Guidelines have been updated and launched officially in June 2020 in all six UN Official languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian Spanish).

With the aim to facilitate the roll-out of the COP Guidelines at the national level, significant efforts have been dedicated in order to release the materials in languages other than the official UN ones. This translated into a series of trainings, workshops, webinars and communication campaigns supported by ITU. ITU Office for Europe thanks all administrations and stakeholders who made it possible and encourages others to engage in this process as well.

Albanian language:

COP Guidelines for Parents and Educators in Albanian language

Bosnian language:

ITU COP Guidelines and related materials in Bosnian language

Croatian language:

ITU COP Guidelines and related materials in Croatian language

Serbian language:

ITU COP Guidelines and related materials in Serbian language

Hungarian language:

COP Guidelines for Parents and Educators in Hungarian language

Executive summary COP Guidelines for Parents and Educators in Hungarian language

Executive summary COP Guidelines for Policymakers in Hungarian language

Executive summary COP Guidelines for Industry in Hungarian language

Romanian language:

Storybook for children under 9 years old in Romanian language

Workbook for children aged 9 to 12 years old in Romanian language

Social media campaign in Romanian language

Turkish language:

COP Guidelines for Parents and Educators in Turkish language

COP Guidelines for Parents and Educators in Turkish language

Ukrainian language:

COP Guidelines and related materials in Ukrainian language

The ITU COP Guidelines are currently being translated in Maltese and Macedonian languages.

6.4.2 2021 Launching Events of the ITU COP Guidelines translated into National Language (Ukraine, Albania)

Ukraine: The Ukrainian version of the ITU COP Guidelines has been released during the movie format conference "Online Safety: Contemporary Challenges"organized by The Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine. The Conference was co-organized by ITU and was held between 19 and 20 January 2021.

The Albanian version of the ITU COP Guidelines has been launched during the session "National policies to increase child online safety", held within the International Safer Internet Day, on the **9 February 2021** and

organized by the National Authority for Electronic Certification and Cyber Security (AKCESK) of Albania and co-organized by ITU.

More information: https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/Europe/Pages/Projects/NCOPGUIDELINES/Default.aspx

6.4.3 Roll out of the ITU global project "Creating a safe and prosperous Cyberspace for children" in Albania

The National Authority on Electronic Certification and Cybersecurity (NAECCS) of Albania, raised the hand to become a pilot country for the ITU global project "Creating a safe and prosperous Cyberspace for children". Within this context, ITU is supporting the NAECCS in rolling out the COP Guidelines at the national level, following the objective to foster a culture of child online protection with all relevant stakeholders through knowledge sharing and digital skills development. The start of the implementation of the ITU Global Project in Albania was announced during the event "Promoting Implementation of COPs in Albania", which was organized by NAECCS and held on 29 September. The implementation of the Global Project in Albania is planned to take place until March 2023.

6.4.4 Assessment of the National Approach towards the Child Online Protection in North Macedonia

The ITU Office for Europe started in October its assistance on the elaboration of a Child Online Protection National Assessment in North Macedonia. The Assessment includes qualitative and quantitative research, including interviews with relevant national stakeholders, and will lead to developing a strategy and operational roadmap based on identified challenges, opportunities, and recommendations. This assistance will also include national workshops.

6.4.5 Roll-out of the ITU COP Guidelines in Malta

Discussions are being held on activities that can be undertaken at the national level to ensure the creation of a safe and empowering cyberspace for all children and young people in Malta. Potential assistance for the end of 2021 may include support in the elaboration of a background document on the status of child online protection in the country through a review of the national framework in place, as well as awareness raising campaigns. A launching event of the translated ITU COP Guidelines in Maltese language is foreseen to take place at the beginning of February 2021. Upon request from the country, ITU Office for Europe is also part of a High-Level Advisory Board that has been funded by the Malta Organization on the Well-being of the Society with the aim of providing guidance and recommendations on child online protection initiatives.

6.4.6 15th International Conference: Keeping Children and Young People Safe Online, 20-24 September (Online)

The 15th International Conference "Keeping Children and Young People Safe Online" took place virtually between 20 and 24 September 2021. The Conference was co-organized by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) under the framework of the ITU European Regional Initiative EUR4 "Enhancing trust and confidence in the use of information and communication technologies", adopted by WTDC-17 in Buenos Aires. The organization of this event was led by the Polish Safer Internet Center (PCPSI), which comprises the NASK National Research Institute and the Empowering Children Foundation, and the German klicksafe consortium. The centre is co-funded by the European Union. The conference covered a large set of issues related to the safety of children and young people online and acted as a platform for both international and national stakeholders across various sectors such as NGOs, education sector, governments, and industries to reflect on the threats, opportunities and the future of children online safety.

Within this framework, ITU Office for Europe organized the workshop on "**Fostering a Culture of Child Online Protection: Roll-out of the ITU COP Guidelines in Europe**", which was held virtually on 24 September 2021.

The workshop was an open event, mainly targeting child online protection players such as policy-makers, stakeholders from the industry sector, stakeholders in the Educational System, as well as parents and educators, and was attended by 76 participants from countries in the Europe Region.

The workshop focused on providing an overview of the ITU Child Online Protection guidelines for Policy-makers, Parents and Educators, and Industry. Co-authors of the Guidelines presented related objectives and strategies, together with their recommendations. It also provided a platform for stakeholders from Albania, Hungary, Malta, Romania, Turkey and Ukraine to exchange on country-level experiences in developing a child online protection strategy. The main outcomes of the workshop can be found in the Outcome Report

More information on the workshop as well as Outcome Report can be found at the dedicated webpage.

Cybersecurity

6.4.7 ITU 2021 Global CyberDrill: AFRICA and EUROPE Interregional Meeting, 16 September (online)

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in partnership with more than 100 countries improves nations' cybersecurity readiness, protection, and incident response capabilities by conducting annual CyberDrill events at the national, regional, and global level. Over the past ten years, ITU has organized more than thirty capacity-building exercises aiming at enhancing the communication and incident response

abilities of the participating teams, as well as promoting a continued collective defense against cyber threats. .

This year, focused specifically on the role of national Computer Incident and Response Teams (CIRTs) and Computer Security Incident Response Teams (CSIRTs) in building cyber resilience and protecting critical infrastructure, the 2021 CyberDrill conducted three Interregional Meetings tailored around four thematic concepts: reflect, share, learn and practice.

Within the framework of the ITU 2021 Global CyberDrill, ITU Office for Europe, in cooperation with the ITU Regional Office for Africa and the Cybersecurity Division of the ITU Telecommunication Bureau organized the "Africa and Europe Interregional Meeting", which was held virtually on the 16th of September 2021 between 10:00 and 12:30 CEST. The event was attended by 160 participants from over eighty countries around the world.
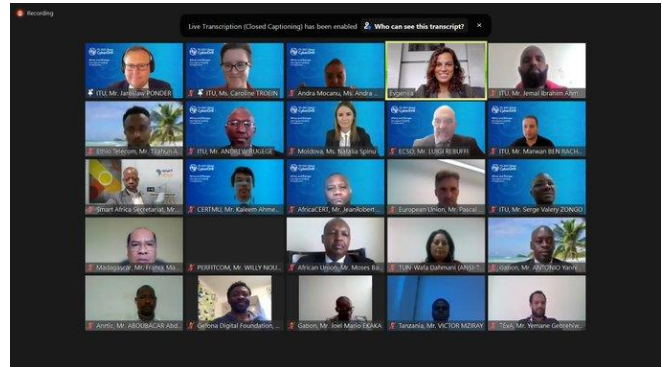
The aim of the event was to connect the cybersecurity community in Africa and Europe and to offer a platform for discussions on addressing cybersecurity cooperation needs, current regional trends, good practices, innovative approaches, lessons learned, as well as to identify common challenges across regions. It also represented the occassion for speakers from reputable organizations and international institutions to share their expertise and perspectives on cybersecurity matters. The event received special opening messages of H.E. Lotte Knudsen, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations and other international organisations in Geneva, Mr. Moses Bayingana, Representative of African Union Commission, and Mr. Lacina Kone, Director General of Smart Africa Secretariat.

More information on the event can be found at the dedicated webpage.

6.5   CSIRT Readiness Assessment in Moldova

With the aim of strengthening resilience of infrastrcuture and confidence of use of ICTs in Moldova, CSIRT readiness assessment is currently carried out in the country, being done in line with a new country's new strategy on digital transformation.

6.6   EUR5: Information and communication technology-centric innovation ecosystems

6.6.1   Digital Innovation Profile for Georgia

Assistance in building an ICT-centric innovation ecosystem is currently provided to Georgia, which includes desktop research, the organization of national consultations, engagement of relevant stakeholders, processing a series of interviews, building a Digital Innovation Profile, including a series of recommendations and projects.. Special feature of this assessment is additional focus of the assessment on the innovation ecosystem in the field of Artificial Intelligence, supported by the by Slovenia, International Research Centre On Artificial Intelligence, that had seconded experts to support the component of investigation focusing on AI.

A series of co-creation workshops were held on 18-19 May and 3 June 2021 with Georgian stakeholders on recommendations and the assessment of the innovation ecosystem in the country.

The work for the Digital Innovation Profile for Georgia has now been completed and will be published in Q4.

6.6.2   Digital Innovation Profile for Serbia

Assistance in building an ICT-centric innovation ecosystem is currently provided to Serbia, which includes desktop research, the organization of national consultations, engagement of relevant stakeholders, processing a series of interviews, building a Digital Innovation Profile, including a series of recommendations and projects. The finalization of the work is planned for Q4 2021. As series of interviews, stakeholders workshops, coordination sessions have been carried out in order to arrive to the final delivery that will be officially launched in January 2022.

6.6.3 Regional Good Practices: Accelerating innovation, entrepreneurship and digital transformation in Europe

Report on 'Regional Good Practices: Accelerating innovation, entrepreneurship and digital transformation' has been completed and published. This report provides an overview of the comparative innovation capacity of the European region through ICT-centric innovation policy monitors and insight on how good practices can strengthen capacity to integrate ICT innovation into national development agendas. The full report can be accessed here: https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/Europe/Documents/Publications/GOOD_PRACT.03-2021-PDF-E.pdf

The report was launched on 1st July 2021 at the dedicated event The main overview and key findings of the report were presented during the session. Four stakeholders from Albania, Georgia, Serbia, and Sweden presented their countrys' digital transformation journey based on the three engines of growth, as well as their innovative good practices highlighted in the report. This event was the first step towards the ITU Regional Innovation Forum for Europe. It was followed and viewed by over 300 individuals via Zoom platform, Twitter and YouTube live streams.

6.6.4 Regional Innovation Forum for Europe

The ITU Regional Innovation Forum for Europe took place virtually from 22-23 September 2021 and was kindly supported by North Macedonia. The forum brought together regional stakeholders to share insights and offer much needed opportunities for leaders and innovators across sectors to pioneer new approaches, share best practices and adopt new solutions across industries and markets. It fostered inclusive, constructive, and practical dialogue on three main areas: the general digital innovation ecosystem, agricultural digital ecosystem, and the ICT accessibility ecosystem.

The Forum had almost 70 speakers, and was attended by almost 100 participants on the zoom platform, as well as daily by around 460 participants via YouTube and Twitter channels.

7   ITU Centres of Excellence for Europe
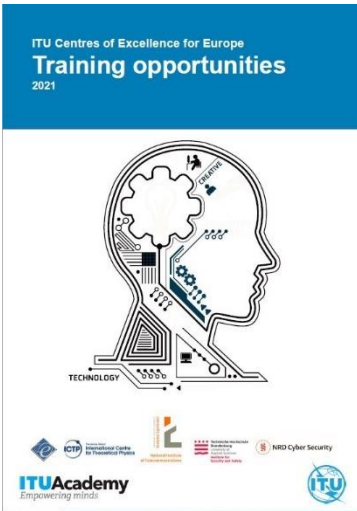
The ITU Centres of Excellence (CoE) programme offers continuous education to ICT professionals and executives in the public and private spheres through face-to-face or distance learning programmes. The Centres serve as regional focal points for professional development, research, and knowledge sharing, as well as provide specialist training services to external clients. With the support from multilateral and regional organizations, CoE networks have been established in all ITU regions. The current network is composed of 29 Centres across the globe, including 6 in Europe. In 2021 the ITU Centres of Excellence for Europe are offering 21 trainings. All trainings conclude with testing component. A certificate of achievement is awarded to candidates who successfully complete the end-of-course assessment(s). The following table presents all training opportunities offered in 2021 and displayed in chronological order.

The 5th Meeting of the ITU Centres of Excellence (CoE) Steering Committee for Europe took place on 8 July 2021 and discussed and approved plans for the upcoming quarters. In 2021 the ITU Centres of Excellence for Europe are offering 21 trainings. All trainings conclude with a testing component. A certificate of achievement is awarded to candidates who successfully complete the end-of-course assessment(s). All currently available training opportunities offered in 2021 are displayed in chronological order in the Europe Training Opportunities 2021 catalogue available here.

The 6th Meeting of the ITU Centres of Excellence (CoE) Steering Committee for Europe took place on 5 November 2021, which aimed to approve the workplan for 2022. This led to the approval of 21 training opportunities for the year 2022.

The training opportunitie for the year 2022 are now available and displayed in chronoligical order in the "Training Opportunities 2022

catalogue opportunitie for the year 2022" are now available and displayed in chronoligical order in the Europe Training Opportunities 2022 catalogue.

List of Courses:

Dates	Title of the Course
1-8 February	Strategic aspects for internet governance and innovations
1 March - 31 December	Cyber incident response
1 March - 31 December	Cybersecurity techniques
1 March - 31 December	Information security management system
8-15 March	Wireless access technologies to internet network
12-19 April	Security and OoS in internet network
25 May - 21 June	Future broadband: ultra-broadband Internet, clouds, IoT and artificial intelligence
1 June - 31 December	Cyber Risk Management
7-8 June	5G technologies for IoT
14-21 June	Legal, regulatory and technical aspects of cloud computing in international data transfers
23-30 August	Technical, business and regulatory aspects of 5G networks
27 September - 4 October	QoS technologies and regulation for fixed and mobile
15-16 November	Applications of satellite based IoT networks
16 November - 13 December	Future mobile and wireless broadband: LTE-A-Pro, WiFi, satellites, 5G NR and AI

8   Flagship reports launched in 2021

The following presents a series of publications that have been launched in 2021 and/or to be launched shortly. All reports and publications are an important milestone of the implementation of the ITU Regional Initiatives ensuring evidence based approached applied in the actions undertaken across the region. More information on publications and reports relevant to the Europe region can be consulted here.

## 8.1   Digital trends in Europe 2021: ICT trends and developments in Europe, 2017-2020

ITU Report on Digtial Trends in Europe 2021 was launched on 18 January and is available for download here. This report provides an overview of trends and developments in ICT infrastructure, access and use in the Europe region, which includes 46 ITU Member States and is home to a population of 686 million people. The report highlights changes in ICT adoption since the last World Telecommunication Development Conference in 2017 (WTDC-17) and during the COVID-19 pandemic, tracks the evolution of regulation, and reviews progress and challenges of the ITU regional initiatives for Europe. Its objective is to serve the ITU membership as a reference for reviewing progress and identifying ICT development priorities in the Europe region.

8.2   ICT Accessibility Assessment for the Europe Region

ITU Report on the ITU Accessibility Assessment for the Europe Region was launched in on 25 March and is available for download here. The ICT accessibility assessment for the Europe region was launched in the midst of the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which has reinforced the importance of ICT accessibility. It has been designed to provide ITU members and stakeholders from the ITU Europe region, consisting of 46 countries, with a holistic view of ICT accessibility requirements, the implementation status of ICT accessibility laws, regulations, policies and institutional frameworks, and with good practices and recommendations.

8.3   Digitally empowered Generation Equality: Women, girls and ICT in the context of COVID-19 in selected Western Balkan and Eastern Partnership countries
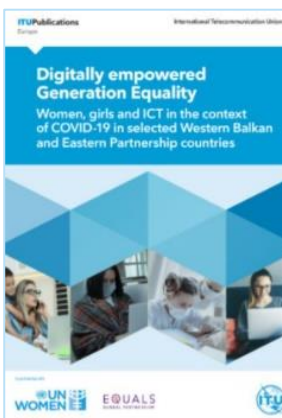
ITU Report on *Digitally empowered Generation Equality: Women, girls and ICT in the context of COVID-19 in selected Western Balkan and Eastern Partnership countries* was launched in on 9 March 2021 and is available for download here. This report has been prepared jointly wiht UN Women. Digital technology has never been more integral to people's lives. Over 90 per cent of jobs worldwide already have a digital component, and many will soon require sophisticated digital skills. During the COVID-19 pandemic, digital technology has become a lifeline for millions around the world and a critical tool for coping with the crisis and its aftermath. While the pandemic is causing dual health and economic crises, it also represents a historical opportunity to accelerate the digital revolution. This report focuses on women and girls using, studying and working in digital technology in five Western Balkan States (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia) and three Eastern Partnership countries (Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova). On the surface, these eight counties are well poised to take advantage of the new digital economy, as they have a high degree of digital access and connectivity and populations with strong academic foundations in mathematics and science. This report provides a series of actionable racomendations to be addressed in the future actions undertaken under the ITU Regional Initiaitves for Europe.

8.4 ITU Study on the assessment of digital accessibility of policies in Serbia

The abrupt surge in application and demand for technological solutions during the COVID-19 crisis has amplified the divide between the digitally "connected" and "unconnected", worsening the uneven access to opportunities among people and making those with limited access to technologies much more vulnerable than ever. Specifically, the lack of accessibility in any forms of digital technology prevents persons with disabilities from accessing critical information affecting their health, security, and socio-economic activities. The pandemic made it even more evident that the ICT must be accessible. To achieve this goal, Governments must include ICT accessibility considerations in their laws, policies, regulations, strategies, and standards as the key enabler to guarantee equal and equitable access to public information and services.

This report aims to support the Government of the Republic of Serbia to jointly fulfil the Global Commitments and Targets on ensuring technological advances enable and accelerate the achievement of SDGs by 2030. This report provides an updated overview of ICT Accessibility and Digital Inclusion in Serbia and a comprehensive vision of ICT accessibility policies and strategies implemented in the country. A set of good practices and recommendations for national policymakers and stakeholders on ensuring the inclusiveness perspective is included in key domains such as e-government, education, employment, and emergency communications. Finally, the report will represent background knowledge for future national ICT accessibility initiatives to advance digital inclusion in the country.

8.5 Implementing 5G for Good: Do electromagnetic fields matter?

Human exposure to electromagnetic fields (EMF) from radio frequencies (RF) (RF-EMF) has been an element of concern and dispute among the public in some countries and has often coincided with the deployment of next generations of mobile technology (2G, 3G, 4G and now 5G). The COVID-19 pandemic and the related spread of misinformation around fifth-generation (5G) mobile technology has exacerbated this trend and, fuelled by social media, has caused a spate of incidents in a variety of countries slowing down the deployment of 5G and affecting existing infrastructure and continuity of services. This report seeks to provide an overview of relevant scientific evidence and outline the main contemporary challenges relating to RF-EMF. It will take into consideration the work and deliverables from the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) and the Institute of Electrical

and Electronics Engineers (IEEE). Finally, the report elaborates on the dimensions and to what extent electromagnetic fields policy is relevant for the deployment of 5G mobile networks.

8.6 Regional good practices: Accelerating innovation, entrepreneurship and digital transformation in Europe

The Regional good practices: Accelerating innovation, entrepreneurship and digital transformation in Europe was prepared by ITU Office for Europe within the Telecommunication Development Bureau of ITU with contribution from Digital Innovation ecosystem thematic priority. ITU appreciates the cooperation of the companies, organizations and agencies that provided information on the good practices included in this report.

8.7 5G Implementation in non-European Union Countries of the Europe Region

As the European Union (EU) moves ahead with harmonious IMT-2020 (5G) development, as demonstrated by the recent 5G Action Plan seeking to launch 5G services in all Member States by the end of 2020 as well as to ensure uninterrupted 5G coverage in urban areas and along main transport paths by 2025, non-EU countries of the Europe region that are proceeding independently risk being left behind or not being monitored appropriately. This series of 5G country profiles in respect of non-EU countries offers a clearer picture of the status of 5G implementation in non-EU countries of the Europe region. As each country has its own specificities, the 5G country profiles seek to draw attention to the main drivers of 5G from different angles, but in a structured way. Overall, this paper seeks to offer a better and comparable picture of 5G implementation across 18 non-EU countries of the Europe region, namely Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, 5G implementation in non-European Union countries of the Europe region 6 Iceland, Israel, Liechtenstein, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, San Marino, Serbia, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom and the Vatican. The paper also seeks to aggregate data so as to enable the identification of key trends characterizing the development of 5G across these countries, in order to provide all stakeholders operating in the region with the necessary information for effective decision-making. A first draft of this report had been published in the context of the ITU Regional Forum for Europe on 5G strategies, policies, and implementation held virtually on 22–23 October 2020.

8.8 Connectivity in Education: Status and recent developments in nine non-European Union countries
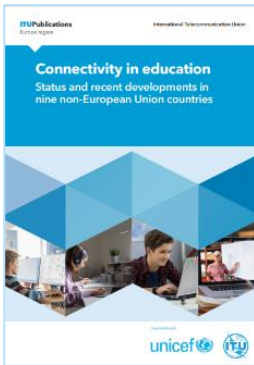
This joint ITU-UNICEF Report provides aggregate and country-level updates on connectivity in education in 9 countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey, and Ukraine. The report reviews the status of ICTs as drivers of i) digital skills development, ii) e-governance of education systems, and iii) smart and flexible education delivery at school and at home. For each country and at the aggregate level, it provides i) an overview of education systems and broadband markets at the country level, ii) an overview of government strategies in education and connectivity and the role foreseen for connectivity in education, iii) an account of multi-stakeholder partnerships and financing mechanisms for investment in school connectivity, and iv) an overview of the responses each country has undertaken to COVID-19 towards ensuring continuity of learning through ICTs.

8.9 Digital Development Country Profiles – Georgia, Moldova, North Macedonia
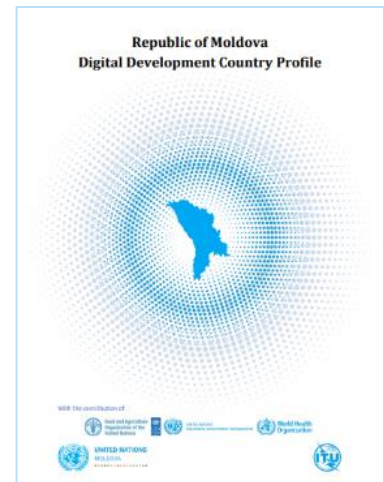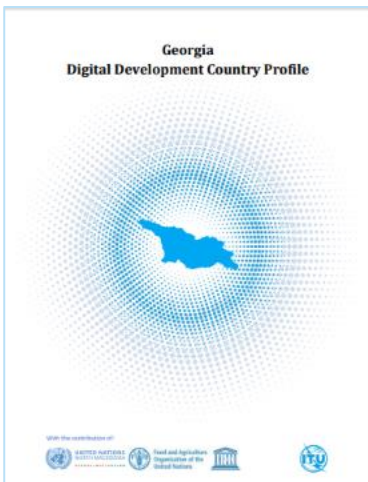
The aim of the Digital Development Country Profiles series is to provide a comparable analysis for priority countries of the European region, namely Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Ukraine. The Report addresses digital transformation based on the various experiences of the ITU, the UN specialized agency for ICTs, and other UN system organizations, offering a broad overview of the activities and projects being implemented at the national level and in the wider region. This report seeks to build a reference for discussions on digital development at the country level in the Republic of Moldova. It will serve as a guide for future dialogue with country stakeholders and pave the way for increasing fit-for-purpose engagements of the UN system in the country. It will equip decisionmakers at the national level and

international stakeholders with an overview of the various components of digital development at the country level.

- [Digital Development Country Profile – Georgia](#)
- [Digital Development Country Profile – North Macedonia](#)
- [Digital Development Country Profile – Moldova](#)

8.10 Digital Transformation Compact

The Digital Transformation Compact has been developed by the International Telecommunication Union Office for Europe and UNDP to be used as a tool in the process of defining the vision for digital transformation, supporting leadership and coagulation of national efforts, donor coordination and capturing of the emerging opportunities as the country enters a new stage. The methodology used in this document is based on a five-building-blocks framework that analyses digital transformation from a variety of perspectives, enabling an understanding of the various dimensions of digital development and how they interact at country level. Below a short snapshot of each building block and how it fits in the overall digital development scenario of the country.

8.11 Other reports coming soon

The folloiwng presents a series of other publications to be released shortly

- Regional Assessment on EMF (ITU)
- Digital Development Profile Albania (ITU-UN CT – Partners)
- Digital Development Profile Ukraine (ITU-UN CT – Partners)
- Digital innovation Profile of Georgia (ITU)
- Digital Innovation Profile of Serbia (ITU)
- Digital Skills Assessment Albania (ITU)
- Digital Skills Assessment North Macedonia (ITU)
- Digital Skills Case Study for Ukraine (ITU)
- Digital Excellence in Agriculture (ITU-FAO)
- Getting prepared to meet EU expectation on digitalization in agriculture : A guidebook for pre-accession countries (ITU-FAO)