

One year anniversary of teleworking due to the COVID-19 Pandemic

12 March 2021

Message to BR Staff

**Mario Maniewicz,
Director, Radiocommunication Bureau**

Dear colleagues,

Today 12 March marks one year since ITU instituted the mandatory work from home order following the declaration of COVID-19 as a global pandemic.

It is hardly conceivable that for most of us, we have not walked through the ITU corridors for 365 days.

We have not had our regular coffee or lunch breaks, we have not given a delegate or colleague, a handshake or friendly hug, or even just walked across the corridor to the next office for a chat or have a hearty laugh. We are indeed living and working in interesting, but clearly challenging times.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic has brought unprecedented changes to the way we work and live, it has had some positive impact. Indeed, teleworking has proven itself an important aspect of ensuring business continuity, as well as the opportunity for better work-life balance.

In the BR we have endeavoured to keep our business virtually open for all our members and, on many fronts, we even exceeded our expectations.

Some of the key highlights of 2020 include.

- The World Radiocommunication Seminar 2020 was for the first time ever held virtually from 30 November to 11 December 2020. Also, for the first time, the Plenary Sessions held during the first week of the seminar were open to everyone, including entities that are not members of the ITU Radiocommunication Sector (ITU-R). The WRS20 plenary sessions were

attended by 2'183 participants from 159 countries, with the workshop sessions attended by 914 participants from 143 countries.

- The Bureau hosted three very successful Satellite Webinars between September and November discussing current technical and regulatory situation, evolution, and trends in the field of satellite communication. Being entirely online and open to the public, these seminars drew over 3,750 participants from around the world.
- The 83rd, 84th and 85th meetings of the Radio Regulations Board meeting were held virtually with full interpretation in English, French and Russian. The members of the board, connecting from 12 different countries, joined the meeting along with the BR Director and BR subject matter experts.
- The 27th meeting of the Radiocommunication Advisory Group (RAG) took place from 25 to 27 May 2020. This was the first ever virtual RAG meeting. The meeting had over 200 participants from 25 Member States and 22 other entities joining virtually with full interpretation in the six ITU languages.
- The ITU Regional Radiocommunication Seminar 2020 for the Americas Region (RRS-20-Americas) was held virtually from 13-24 July in collaboration with the Caribbean Telecommunications Union (CTU). The seminar drew more than 350 participants from 38 countries. Similarly, the ITU Regional Radiocommunication Seminar for the Asia-Pacific Region (RRS-20 Asia-Pacific) was held virtually from 19-30 October 2020 and was attended by more than 300 participants from over 30 countries and 10 international organizations, associations, and academia.
- Following consultation with the ITU-R Study Groups leaders, and considering the necessary matters to be addressed, all meeting of the ITU-R Study Groups and related Working Parties continue to be held successfully online.
- In September 2020, we published the ITU Radio Regulations 2020. This was indeed a proud moment for all staff involved given that we were able

to finalize this key publication within the foreseen schedule despite the COVID-19 related challenges. We then published the ITU Radio Regulations Table of Frequency Allocations Software as well as the Maritime Manual, all on schedule.

These milestones could not have been a success without the hard work, dedication to duty and co-operation of BR staff teleworking effectively.

On behalf of the entire BR management, I would like to sincerely thank each one of you for the outstanding achievements.

I am highly appreciative of everyone's efforts during 2020. I sincerely hope that 2021 will see us gradually returning to a normal life, and that COVID-19 would become just a distant memory.