

# THE UPCOMING ECONOMIC CHALLENGES FOR ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS IN EUROPE

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## Call for papers

2<sup>nd</sup> Network for Economic Research on Electronic Communications (NEREC) Conference

Madrid, 29-30 October 2010

The upcoming challenges for electronic communications are arguably related with the deployment of Next Generation Networks (NGN), the management of spectrum and the new involvement of public administrations and regulatory bodies in the electronic communications framework.

Next Generation Networks (NGN) will be the supporting infrastructure of ubiquitous broadband. Precisely the conditions for the deployment of the access part of NGN are currently on the forefront of the debate about the role of telecommunication markets, the best regulation for them and the level and modes of potential public involvement. In fact, it has been argued that a return of a larger role of the state will inevitable happen as a consequence of NGN deployment. To prove the case, and in broad general terms, it can be said that the current early stage of NGAN deployment –particularly out of main urban areas– signals that the return on investments is still seen as uncertain. This situation is influenced by some ignorance about the future technical roadmaps, possibly some doubts about the implementation of the regulatory scenario, as well as, especially, the economic uncertainties.

Radio spectrum availability is linked with an efficient spectrum usage and management. In fact, the traditional model for spectrum management appears as excessively complex and lacking flexibility, which has led to the reinforcement of a current opinion favourable to the introduction of market economy criteria in radio electric spectrum management. Many national and international authorities in charge of spectrum management have released documents supporting the modification of the current spectrum management models and defending the inclusion of market mechanisms. Therefore, that the radioelectric spectrum needs a new management model –or at least a renewed one– is an assertion over which there exists a consensus among public administrations, players with interest in the market and researchers. However, there is still a lack of evidence on the effects of the shyly introduced new ways of managing the spectrum intend to increase flexibility and transparency, as well as the speed of

the response to technological innovations. Even more, there is also a shortage of practical spectrum reform proposals to improve resource usage efficiency, while maintaining certain inalienable technical requirements.

In addition, the rise of what has been called the knowledge economy or new economy has reinforced the role of telecommunications as a strategic investment. The consensus regarding the importance of telecommunications has recently changed the reasoning at play. It no longer includes the existence of an adequate infrastructure as a factor affecting regional development. Instead, its absence is considered a sign of underdevelopment. As a result, governments pay particular attention to telecommunications. This renewed interest includes revamped digital strategies, new regulatory decisions and even in some cases direct intervention in network deployment.

The phenomena described above are highly relevant economically in both their practical qualities (as regards their impact on markets and society) and their theoretical aspects (discussions of appropriateness and validity).

Therefore, in the spirit of NEREC aim to foster an informed debate about the electronic communications industry, this second NEREC Conference is devoted to the economic assessment of the upcoming challenges in the electronic communications domain, including the examination of past experiences and new data; in this effort, the final objective becomes to predict what future results could be achieved and help ensure that the appropriate decisions are made today.

For contributions, five specific areas of high relevance for electronic communications are particularly encouraged:

- the opportunities, difficulties, possible models and lessons learned from the deployment of next generation networks, including the status of new public or semi-public deployments,
- the potential impact of new radio spectrum policies, regulation and practical management in the domain,
- the evolution of the role and scope of universal service and other related policies to extend the reach of broadband networks,
- the debate on the effects of net neutrality, and
- the theoretical and practical analyses of any of the actions included in the European Digital Agenda with a direct impact on the electronic communications domain from an economic perspective.

## **SUBMISSIONS**

*Extended abstracts* not exceeding 1,200 words should be submitted to [assistance@nerec.es](mailto:assistance@nerec.es) by 25th July 2010, highlighting the outline of the final paper, the methodology used and the expected results.

The conference language is English.

## **IMPORTANT DATES**

Deadline for submission of abstracts	25 July 2010
Notification of acceptance	1 September 2010
Deadline for full paper submission	15 October 2010
Conference	29–30 October 2010