



Czech Telecommunication Office

April 2020

Telegraphically on communications

Public consultation on 5G auction extended

The Czech Telecommunication Office extended the deadline to submit comments in the public consultation on draft conditions of the forthcoming tender for granting the rights to use radio frequencies in the 700 MHz and 3.5 GHz bands. The comments can be submitted until 4 May 2020. Read more on page 6.

CTU supports the actions of service providers during the crisis

The Czech Telecommunication Office appreciates the intensive efforts of undertakings in the electronic communications and postal services sectors who are taking all measures to ensure the availability of their services in a maximum possible range and quality during this severe situation.

Net neutrality during the current crisis

The Body of the European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC) and the European Commission (EC) issued a joint statement on how to cope with the increased traffic load due to the Covid-19 pandemic with regard to the net neutrality rules.

CTU during the coronavirus pandemic

With regard to the government measures, CTU operated in a limited regime from 16 March. Each department continued to accept electronic submissions and postal items. For urgent cases, the office hours were limited to Monday and Wednesday from 9 to 12 am. As of 20 April, CTU reinstated its full operation but with increased hygiene requirements.

On 12 March, the Czech government announced state of emergency on the territory of the Czech Republic for 30 days. It was then extended until 30 April. Shortly after the announcement, CTU summoned a meeting of its emergency board to discuss all government measures and restrictions in order to ensure continued operation as far as possible. The first taken precaution was increased hygiene requirements at all CTU departments.

Following the Resolution No. 194 of 15 March and Resolution No. 348 of 30 March, CTU started to operate in a limited regime. The public could contact CTU electronically or by post, for urgent cases the office hours were limited to Monday and Wednesday from 9 to 12 am.

The providers of electronic communications and postal services also implemented crisis measures. Due to the quarantine, which forced most of the population to stay at home, the traffic load of public electronic communications networks skyrocketed. However, the networks proved to be highly resistant since no major service disruption occurred during the state of emergency.

More difficulties were experienced by the Czech Post with its vast network of post offices. Besides ensuring its operation, the Czech Post also had to introduce new ways of delivery, such as contactless delivery. This meant delivering the item to the addressee's door and leaving it there for the addressee to pick up. The Czech Post kept informing CTU about the state of provision of universal service and closure of its post offices due to the crisis. However, CTU found out that even in the state of emergency, the taken actions were not entirely in compliance with the requirements on quality and availability of universal service. So, the Czech Post gradually returned to the standard ways of delivery and kept informing public about the changes on its websites.

CTU's emergency board cooperates with other ministries and together, they submit crucial information about the state of operability and security of critical infrastructure bodies in communication and information systems (i.e. big mobile operators and Czech Post) to the central emergency body. The aim is to minimise any negative effects on operation of public electronic communications networks and postal services.

Relevant Market Analyses

Market No. 1 – Wholesale call termination on individual public telephone networks provided at a fixed location and Market No. 2 – Wholesale voice call termination on individual mobile networks

On 26 March, CTU received the European Commission's decision on the conducted relevant market analyses of markets no. 1 and 2. In its decision, the Commission submitted only one comment to both analyses. In this comment, the Commission recommends CTU to assess all options of updating the amount of currently used prices for call termination (at a fixed location as well as on mobile networks) before the new intra-EU termination rates start to apply (the Commission should adopt the relevant legal act by 31 December 2020).

CTU settled the comment in the final version of both analyses. Considering the expected intra-EU price regulation for call termination, which should be applied from the beginning of 2021, CTU will not adjust the termination rates in the sense of the Commission's comment, because such adjustment would be applied only for a very short time. The CTU Council adopted both analyses on its meeting on 15 April 2020.

Comparison tool

On 19 March, CTU published [a call on tender](#) to create a tool for comparison of prices and quality of electronic communications services. The call was open until 14 April. CTU is now assessing all received offers.

Operators reaction to the pandemic

Access to websites related to Covid-19

The mobile operators O2, O2 Family, T-Mobile and Vodafone enabled free access to the Government's and public health authorities' websites which collect information about measures related to the Covid-19 pandemic. These websites are [vlada.cz](#) and [mzcr.cz](#). CTU supports this effort, as stated in its [press release](#) from 20 March 2020.

Remission of delay during the state of emergency

CTU is prepared to discuss possible remission of delay in actions of participants in administrative proceedings held by it during the state of emergency.

With regard to the Ministry of the Interior [recommendation](#), CTU is fully aware of the difficulties brought upon some participants of CTU's administrative proceedings by the state of emergency (e.g., limited free movement, limited business activities, etc.) which can delay procedural deadlines or cause missing some procedural actions.

Generally, missing procedural action (e.g., deadline to submit appeal against decision) can be excused after fulfilment of requirements set by the law, if it does not state otherwise.

As a general principal, the participant must request within **15 days** after the end of the state of emergency a remission of delay in a given action **and also complete the missed action** (e.g., submit opposition to the order or appeal against the decision). Otherwise, CTU cannot deal with it.

CTU is aware, that in many cases the participants can find themselves in difficult life situations, but as an administrative body CTU must in all cases individually assess all reasons of submitted requests for remission.

All submission options, which apply also to the request for remission, are described [here](#).

Checked by CTU in March...

... adherence to the terms and conditions of General Authorisation No. VO-R/12/09.2010-12 for the use of radio frequencies and for the operation of equipment for broadband data transmission in the 2.4 GHz to 66 GHz bands.

Out of 25 inspections performed, CTU discovered 23 defects. These mainly involved harmful interference with priority radiocommunication services stations (meteorological radars). CTU requested remedy of the deficiencies and subsequently initiated administrative proceedings.

... use of radio frequencies without an authorisation.

CTU carried out 4 inspections focused on the use of frequencies without an authorisation. In one case, CTU discovered operation on frequencies without the individual authorisation. Administrative proceedings have been initiated.

... sources of interference with the operation of electronic communications equipment and networks, the provision of electronic communications services or the operation of radiocommunications services.

In March, CTU completed 120 investigations, namely 77 cases of interference with television reception (67 cases involved interference with DVB-T2 reception), 15 cases of interference with GSM, UMTS and LTE public mobile communications networks, 21 cases of interference with a meteorological radar, 4 cases of interference with broadcasting and satellite signal reception, one case of interference with mobile and fixed service equipment, short-range device and amateur service device. In four cases of interference with public mobile communications networks, the source of interference was an active element of television reception. In one case, the LTE base station was identified as a source of interference with DVB-T and DVB-T2 reception. The investigation of 67 complaints about poor DVB-T2 reception identified in 49 cases a defect in the viewers' equipment, in seven cases the interference ceased, or was sporadic and in two cases the source of interference was caused outside transmitting and receiving side (shading, rebound caused by off-road barriers).

... pilot operation of LTE base stations in the 800 MHz band.

As of 31 March, 222 base stations were in pilot operation, and 16,768 stations were in permanent operation. In March, CTU received 94 reports of interference and completed investigation of 77 cases of interference with television reception; the BTS LTE in the 800 MHz band was a source of interference with digital terrestrial television reception (DVB-T and DVB-T2) in one case. In 57 cases, CTU discovered defects of the viewers' reception equipment, in eight cases the interference ceased or was sporadic. In two cases the problem was caused by shading or rebound. Eight reports of interference were cancelled by the reporters during the investigation process.

... postal services.

In March, CTU issued one new certificate of notification of business in the postal services sector. The new operator is company Faboten plus s.r.o. The up-to-date list of all notified operators is available at CTU [website](#).

... universal service

On 16 March, CTU published a call for comments on draft decision to impose obligation under universal service allowing persons with special social needs according to Section 44 and 45 of the Electronic Communications Act to choose prices or price tariffs which differ from price tariffs provided under general terms and conditions so that these persons had access and could use partial service and publicly available telephone service according to Section 38(3) of the Electronic Communications Act. The comments could be submitted in the period of one month after publication of the call.

The Czech networks can handle increased data traffic

The Covid-19 pandemic and emergency measures adopted in many EU countries to ensure contactless communication between citizens brought significant increase in data traffic which can cause network capacity deficiencies in some countries.

The European Commission (EC) and the Body of the European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC) issued a joint statement declaring that in line with Article 3(3) of [Regulation \(EU\) 2015/2120](#) the Internet access service providers can apply exceptional traffic management measures to avoid possible network congestion. The EC and BEREC also called upon telecom operators, application providers and end users to make responsible use of data services.

To ensure monitoring of the situation, the EC and BEREC, with the support of national regulatory authorities, set up a special monitoring mechanism to control volume of data traffic, potential problems due to increased traffic and measures adopted by the providers. After a week of operation, it can be said that networks in the Czech Republic handle the increased data traffic without significant problems.

It is worth to mention, that Czech service providers allow their customers free access to selected government websites with up-to-date information about Covid-19 pandemic. Each operator also offered to their customers to extend the volume of services free of charge, e.g., unlimited data or offers to seniors.

Legislative changes

On 23 March 2020, [Government Order No. 120/2020 Coll.](#), amending Government Order No. 199/2018 Coll., on Technical plan for transition of terrestrial digital television broadcasting from DVB-T standard to DVB-T2 standard was published in the Collection of Law, vol. 44. Details about the consequences can be found in the next section.

On 1 April 2020, [Act No. 311/20199 Coll.](#), amending Act No. 127/2005 Coll., on electronic communications entered into force. This act amends mainly rights and obligations for porting telephone number pursuant to Section 37 of the Electronic Communications Act. It also significantly decreases the amount of payment (contractual fine) in case of early termination of a fixed term contract (Section 63(1)(p) of the Act) as well as it introduces an electronic tool for independent and free comparison of prices and quality of various publicly available electronic communications services. In terms of quality of provided service, CTU will release the tool or ensure its operation by 1 January 2021. More information about the new amendment can be found in [Monthly Monitoring Report No. 12/2019](#).

Radio spectrum management

Suspension of transition to DVB-T2 broadcasting standard

On 23 March 2020, the Czech Government adopted [Order No. 120/2020 Coll.](#), amending the original Order on Technical plan for transition to DVB-T2 standard. The amendment states, that deadlines set in the annexes shall not apply, with exception to deadlines set for transmitter Jihlava – station Javořice channel 30. This channel will be tuned on the original date in order to ensure compliance with concluded international coordination agreements. To avoid any delay, this Government Order entered into force on the day of its declaration.

One of the measures restricts retail sale of consumer electronics. However, it is crucial that the consumer electronics for DVB-T2 standard is available to public for proper reception of terrestrial digital television broadcasting. Therefore, the transition process had to be suspended to the extent necessary to ensure public health protection and public security. This eliminated any negative effect on people who have not yet been prepared for the new broadcasting DVB-T2 standard and ensured they will be fully informed about adopted measures. It also helped the operators to focus on working capacities which are affected by the coronavirus pandemic and to ensure smooth functioning of their communication networks.

This procedure also helps with another problem related with the transition, i.e. the installation and setting up the set-top-box or the new television. Especially for the most critical group of elderly people, the installation requires another person who can help them. During the current situation of restricted free movement such possibility is undesirable or prevented.

Last but not least, the transition may also require changes on common television antennas wiring. Such changes are usually done by technicians. However, during the current situation, their free movement is also restricted by the government measures.

Currently, a new amendment to the technical plan for transition is under way. This amendment will include up-to-date timeframe of the transition process. The amendment will be adopted according to the current development and when the situation allows for problem-free continuation of the transition process on both public and operators' side.

Refarming frequencies in the 900 MHz band

During the nights of 20th and 21st and the nights of 21st and 22nd April, the mobile operators O2, Vodafone and T-Mobile refarmed their block allocations of radio frequencies in the 900 MHz band. The exchange of allocation frequency ranges in the 900 MHz band had been prepared by CTU and the mobile operators since autumn 2018. The aim was to create conditions for future use of radio frequencies by modern and more effective technologies.

Based on CTU's suggestion, the operators agreed on final allocation of the new block allocation of radio frequencies while preserving the total range corresponding to allocated blocks of radio frequencies, i.e., Vodafone 10 MHz, T-Mobile and O2 12.4 MHz each.

After public consultation, CTU decided at the end of 2019 to change the block allocations of radio frequencies in the 900 MHz band and, with accord from holders of block allocations, issued temporal individual authorisation to use the current radio frequencies until the end of April 2020. The operators then jointly prepared a scenario (including a timeframe) of individual steps and discussed it with the bodies of the Integrated Rescue System. In a press release, the public was informed to use the single European emergency number 112 if the emergency lines were unavailable during the process.

The exchange of each radio channel was done in three stages. During the night to 21st April, the changes were done in the O2 and Vodafone network and in the second stage of the same night were done changes in the T-Mobile and Vodafone network. In the third stage, during the night to 22nd April, the process was finished by changes in the O2 and T-Mobile network.

After the exchange, the current state of radio frequencies in the 900 MHz band allocated to the operators is as follows:

- a. Vodafone Czech Republic a.s.: 880.1–890.1 / 925.1–935.1 MHz
- b. T-Mobile Czech Republic a.s.: 890.1–902.5 / 935.1–947.5 MHz
- c. O2 Czech Republic a.s.: 902.5–914.9 / 947.5–959.9 MHz

All block allocations are technologically neutral. No negative effect on mobile services users had been registered during the entire process.

700 MHz and 3.5 GHz auction

CTU extended the deadline to submit comments in the public consultation on draft conditions of the forthcoming tender for granting the rights to use radio frequencies in the 700 MHz and 3.5 GHz bands. The comments can be submitted until 4 May 2020.

CTU took into consideration the current situation and complied with a joint request of associations representing undertakings on the telecommunication market. When setting the extended deadline, CTU considered the fact that the discussion with stakeholders on the tender conditions has already been held before launching the public consultation. Therefore, it will take into account all comments submitted by 4 May 2020.

This timeframe will allow all interested parties to prepare and submit relevant comments so that the final tender conditions were set in a way to fulfil intended goals. CTU will continue to inform about the following steps in tender preparation.

Digital radio broadcasting T-Dab

On 30 March, radio transmitters in multiplex CRa DAB+ were launched in Plzeň-Košutka (channel 6D) and Ostrava (channel 7D).

Analogue radio broadcasting "VHF"

On 31 March, transmitter Liberec on frequencies 98.7 MHz (channel RADIO 1) was launched.

Telecommunication regulation in the EU

European Commission

On 19 March 2020, the European Commission and BEREC issued a [joint statement](#) on how to cope with the increased traffic load due to the Covid-19 pandemic with regards to the net neutrality rules. The Commission and BEREC introduced a special monitoring mechanism to map the situation regarding increased traffic in electronic communications network and the measures adopted to avoid network congestion. According to the statement, telecom operators, content and application providers as well as the end users can contribute to a smooth functioning of the Internet during this critical period. This situation also underlines the importance of continued network investment to meet the EU Gigabit Society objectives for 2025.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the Commission decided to postpone the fourth and last [WiFi4EU](#) call. The current situation would not give all municipalities equal opportunities to participate in the call. The new date will be announced to all municipalities in all participating countries.

BEREC

On 10 March 2020, BEREC launched the following public consultations:

- [Public consultation](#) on the BEREC Strategy 2021-2025 and early call for input on the BEREC WP 2021. The consultation was open until 13 April 2020.
- [Public consultation](#) on the updated BEREC Guidelines on Intra-EU communications. The consultation was open until 10 April 2020.
- [Public consultation](#) on draft BEREC Guidelines on very high capacity networks. The original deadline was extended **until 30 April 2020**.

On 1 April, BEREC held a webinar during which its Chairs discussed the outline of the draft BEREC Work Programme 2021 and Strategy 2021 – 2025. The video recording and presentation is available at BEREC [website](#).