OUTCOME REPORT

ITU Regional Engagement Roundtable for Europe – Draft

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Version 1.1

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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1. INTRODUCTION

The "ITU Regional Engagement Roundtable for Europe" was held online on 13th September 2021. The conference was organised by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) office for Europe, and was virtually hosted by the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia. This event was held back to back with the CEPT and the Committee for the ITU policy, also to be held between 13 and 15 September 2021.

The Regional Engagement Roundtable for Europe was conducted by the ITU Office for Europe to offer an opportunity for dialogue between the ITU Office for Europe, decision makers of the ITU Member States, sector members and other relevant stakeholders. The event provided a platform for assessing stakeholders' challenges related to digital development and strategic orientation. The points raised in this event may be taken into consideration in the planning process of the Work Plan of the ITU office for Europe in particular focusing on 2022 implementation.

The event mainly focussed on discussing relevant digital development-related challenges at regional and national levels. It also allowed stakeholders to consider strategic orientations and for the working plan of the ITU Office for Europe, as well as to exchange relevant experiences and good practices.

The event's agenda covered the following:

- Session 1 on "Implementation of the regional initiatives for Europe and BDT thematic priorities"
- Session 2 on "Review of regional and country challenges to be addressed in 2022 (part 1, written contributions)"
- Session 2 on "Review of regional and country challenges to be addressed in 2022 (part 2, oral contributions)"
- Session 3 on "Discussion on 2021/2022 implementation"

The Regional Engagement Roundtable's main outcomes are outlined in this report, which structures the key points emerged during each session.

2. PARTICIPATION

The Forum mainly targeted ITU membership in Europe including national administrations, national regulatory authorities (NRAs), regional organisations and intergovernmental organizations, representing both ITU Members and non-Members. Over 10 speakers presented and discussed during the sessions. Details about the agenda and speakers as well as all presentations delivered, can be found on the event's website[1].

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.

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[1] https://www.itu.int/go/403C

Figure 1 - Virtual Group photo

3. DOCUMENTATION

The Regional Forum was held virtually. Relevant documentation, was made available in electronic form on the event webpage: https://www.itu.int/go/403C

The workshop was supported with **captioning** facility and the edited caption text will be made available soon event page. **Video recordings** of the workshop, as well as this outcome report, are also made available on the website.

4. OPENING SEGMENT

Opening addresses

In his opening speech, His Excellency **Mr. Guram Guramishvili**, Deputy Minister from the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia, welcomed the participants and thanked the ITU for organizing the event. The Deputy Minister proceeded to argue that we live in a constantly evolving Digital World and Information era, where Internet access is fundamental to citizens' participation in building a democratic society. Therefore, the Deputy Minister highlighted the importance of developing broadband connectivity and communication technologies, especially in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. In this context, the Deputy Minister presented some national strategies to enhance connectivity and Internet access. First, the broadband development strategy and its implementation action plan were introduced. It was argued that the strategy has three main targets: increase competitive pressure, attract investment, build digital skills and demand. Furthermore, it was pointed out that Georgia has focussed, in recent years, on devising the 5G Strategic Plan, as well as on developing the community network project for less populated areas. The country is also working to set up a digital hub. Finally, it was said that the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia started working on a long-term national strategy to develop the nation's digital economy and information society, also thanks to the technical assistance of ITU,

which helped Georgia to design a produce assessment report and ICT-centric innovation ecosystem snapshot. Finally, the Deputy Minister expressed his wishes that the virtual roundtable could be an opportunity for stakeholders to foster the dialogue at the regional level.

In her opening speech, **Ms. Cristiana Flutur**, co-President of the CEPT, thanked the Minister and the participants, and reiterated the current influence of ICTs in every aspect of our lives. Arguing that the CEPT role is precisely that of hosting multistakeholder conversations, the importance of discussing challenges at the same roundtable was highlighted, in particular to achieve common European positions in regards to ITU related affairs and beyond. Moreover, the co-President argued that Europe is seen as a reference internationally, and that to enhance its role, it must strengthen the efforts within this framework to ensure the BDT and other sectors of the ITU are fit for purpose and follow the results-based management approach, already practiced at the level of BDT.

Mr. Jaroslaw Ponder, Head of the ITU Office for Europe and Chair of the event, proceeded with recalling the regional preparatory meeting, which happened at the start of the year and focussed on milestones and objectives for the WTDC. He therefore claimed that the Regional Engagement Roundtable would be on the continuation of that work in the following months and year. Upon thanking the first two speakers, as well as all CEPT members, he argued that the response to the call for contributions shows that the Digital Transformation at the regional level is being advanced in the right direction. It was therefore claimed that the engagement roundtable is an opportunity to bring up and address challenges that may be taken in consideration as the 2022 working plan is devised within the BDT. Indeed, despite the European region being very diverse, wherefore countries are characterized by heterogeneous priorities and challenges, and despite the limitations posed by Covid-19, countries are cooperating, and twinning programmes are being set up. Moreover, the ITU Office for Europe has led several activities in 46 countries, which further allow for the transfer of knowledge and for cooperation. Hence, it was reiterated that the objective of this event is that of coordinating between different stakeholders to identify the main challenges and possible solutions for the remaining part of 2021 and for 2022. In this light, Mr Ponder thanked stakeholders for their contributions and in particular, Georgia was thanked for virtually hosting this event. The strategic partners of ITU in Europe, such as the European Commission, BEREC, EaPeReg, RCC of Western Balkans, CEPT, were also thanked. Lastly, being 2022 a fundamental year for the ITU, with three conferences (WTSA-20, WTDC-22 and PP-22), a call was made to all countries to engage in the preparatory processes, including those at the CEPT level, and to actively participate in the concrete work of the here-mentioned 2022 conferences.

5. CONFERENCE SESSIONS

SESSION 1: GLOBAL AND REGIONAL APPROACHES TO REGULATION SUPPORTING THE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Focus: Roundtable discussion on implementation of ITU Regional Initiatives for Europe and BDT Thematic Priorities

Speakers: Presentation 1, ITU office for Europe – Update on implementation: Mr. Jaroslaw Ponder, Head of ITU Office for Europe, ms. AnaMaria Meshkurti, Programme Officer, ITU Office for Europe, ITU, Ms. Sarah Delporte, Project Officer, ITU Office for Europe, ITU, Mr. Julian McNeill, Project Officer, ITU Office for Europe, ITU; Presentation 2, TDAG: Ms. Blanca Gonzalez, TDAG vice-Chair for

Europe & Head of Unit at the Cabinet of the Spanish Secretary of State for Telecommunications and Information Society, Spain; Presentation 3, CEPT Project Team WTDC-21: Ms. Inga Rimkeviciene, Chair of Com-ITU PT WTDC-21 & Head of International and Public Relations Division at the Communications Regulatory Authority (RRT), Lithuania; Presentation 4, ITU Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG): Mr. Fabio Bigi, Chairman, Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG), ITU.

Key points:

- Within the WTDC, the Development Sector is working around ten thematic priorities, including infrastructure, cybersecurity, emergency communication, digital policy and regulation, digital innovation ecosystems, capacity development, statistics, digital services and applications, digital inclusion, and environment. The regional initiatives, agreed upon in the development conference in 2017, determined the orientation of the work on five areas, within which the ITU is providing assistance and services.
- All stakeholders should be aware of the services offered by the ITU within those five regional initiatives, which fit in the context of thematic priorities. It must be noted that ITU cannot offer services which are not covered by outcomes of the WTDC-21 and which are not enabled by the ITU-D.

Officers of the ITU Office for Europe briefed the participants about the status of implementation between January an September 2021. The following slides capture most of the deliverables and a detailed account is available at: http://www.itu.int/go/VL3R

Mr. Julian McNeill, Project Officer, ITU Office for Europe

Ms. Sarah Delporte, Project Officer, ITU Office for Europe

ITU Regional Engagement Roundtable for Europe

EUR 2: Digital services and Applications

Digital Agriculture
Regional Activities

- Digital Excellence in Agriculture: ITU-FAO Regional Contest in Europe and Central Asia
  - Call for Good Practices in the field of Digital Agriculture in Europe and Central Asia (4 November - 11 January 2021);
  - Launching event of the Stocktaking Report (9 July 2021);
  - Awards Ceremony (23 September 2021).

Reports
- ITU-FAO Digital Excellence in Agriculture Stocktaking Report: Good practices in the field of digital agriculture
- ITU-FAO Digital Excellence in Agriculture Report (upcoming, 23 September)
- ITU-FAO Getting Prepared to meet the EU Expectations on Digitalization in Agriculture: A Guide for Pre-accession Countries (upcoming)

Country engagement
- Support to FAO on development of Digital Agriculture Strategy
  - Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Turkey

Mobile Health
Project
- M-health knowledge and innovation hub for Europe (ITU-WHO-Andalusian Public health Service – Funded by the European Union)
  - European Innovation and Knowledge mHealth Hub: Hub Talks 2021 (launched 28 January 2021)

E-governance
Project
- GovStack: Digital Transformation and digitalization of government services for the achievement of the SDGs (ITU, Estonia, Germany and DIAL)
  - Special sessions on "GOVSTACK: Scalable e-Government Solutions for Developing countries"
    - WSIS Forum 2021 (19 May)
    - ITU Emerging Technologies Week (5 July).

E-waste
Project
- ITU-UNEP-UNITAR "Regional e-waste monitor for the Western Balkans"

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Ms. AnaMaria Meshkurti, Programme Officer, ITU Office for Europe

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EUR 3: Digital inclusion

Regional Activities
Accessibility
- Launched series of self paced trainings on accessibility (topics include crises, emergency, web access, inclusive communications)
- Special online session "Fostering Digital Innovation Ecosystem for Accessible Europe" – part of Zero Project Conference 10 Feb 21
- Accessible Europe 2021, 23-25 March 2021, virtual
- The Regional Competition for Innovative Digital Solutions for Accessible Europe *(97 submissions, 29 countries)*
- Curation Programme for Accessible Europe Innovators (open consultation webinar, SME masterclass on accessibility as part of Digital World 2021)
- Side event of 14th Conference of States Parties to the CRPD on Home office and Flexible work environment with an accessibility focus, 18 June 2021
- Side event on Accessibility during the Regional Innovation Forum 23 Sept 2021

Reports
- Regional Assessment of Enabling Environments Ensuring Accessible ICT for Persons with Disabilities in the Europe Region
- ITU study on the assessment of digital accessibility policies in Serbia

Country engagement
- Technical Assistance on ICT Accessibility Policy Review of the Republic of Serbia

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EUR 3: Digital inclusion

Regional Activities

Gender
- Gendered Digital Divide "Digitally Empowered Generation Equality in the wake of COVID-19", 9 March 2021
- Launched Network of Women – Europe, January 2021, virtual
- ITU & CEPT Girls in ICT 10-year anniversary celebration, 22 April 2021
- Network of Women (NoW) Europe virtual Get Together at the CEPT COM-ITU meeting, 5 May 2021
- Network of Women (NoW) for Europe virtual leadership training for all NoW Europe members, 4 June and 9 September 2021.

Digital Skills
- ITU Regional Forum for Europe on Digital Skills Development, 16 March 2021
- Regional Assessment of the National Approaches towards Digital Skills Development

Youth
- Generation Connect – Europe Youth Group established in January 2021 and Youth Declaration launched
- GC Europe Girls in ICT 10-year anniversary celebration , 22 April 2021
- Youth Roundtable event 20 May 2021
- Youth Innovation Session 23 September 2021
- Digital Youth Jam, 3 December 2021

Reports
- Digitally empowered Generation equality: Women, girls and ICT in the context of COVID-19 in selected Western Balkan and Eastern Partnership countries (ITU and UN Women)

Country engagement
- Technical Assistance on Development of the National Strategy on Digital Skills Development in Albania and Ukraine

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Ms. Sarah Delporte, Project Officer, ITU Office for Europe

ITU Regional Engagement Roundtable for Europe

EUR 4: Cybersecurity and COP

Regional Activities
- Roll-out of the COP Guidelines at the National level in Europe Region

- ITU co-organized "15th International Conference: Keeping Children and Young People Safe Online" – Special ITU workshop on "Fostering a culture of child online protection: Roll-out of the Child Online Protection Guidelines in Europe"
    – 24 September 2021

Country engagement
- Moldova: Strategic review of Child Online Protection National Assessment
- North Macedonia: Child Online Protection National Assessment and Operational Roadmap

Projects
- Albania: Roll-out of the ITU COP Global Project "Creating a safe and prosperous cyberspace for children"

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Ms. AnaMaria Meshkurti, Programme Officer, ITU Office for Europe

Ms. Sarah Delporte, Project Officer, ITU Office for Europe

- From the TDAG perspective, being their role to coordinate the regional activities, it is important that all countries participate in the TDAG meeting from 8th to 12th November, which will define the strategy for the Development Sector.
- As the role of developed countries becomes more and more important to support international development and cooperation, it is envisaged that Europe closely and actively participates in TDAG, where also the discussions on developing a vision for 4 to 5 of the 10 thematic priorities. Countries were invited to participate.

- The CEPT representative argued that the World Telecommunication Development Conference, which was postponed by a year, is now approaching. The CEPT established a project team to prepare for the WTDC which drafted European common proposals (ECPs) for the conferences, of which nine have been approved, and has developed, together with national ministries and representatives, a European common proposal on regional priorities, that will interest the period 2022-2025. These priorities regard digital infrastructure development, Digital Transformation for resilience, inclusion and skills development, trust and confidence in the use of digital technologies and the last, digital innovation ecosystem.

- From 2022, these priorities will be translated into actions through projects, initiatives and events on the regional and national level. In the light of the RPM which took place at the beginning of this year, the bottom-up approach is fundamental, and it is vital all countries participate in devising the strategies to enforce the digital priorities.

- From the ITU point of view, it is important that all activities are coordinated with the three sectors of Standardization, Radiocommunication and Development. In fact, the Inter-sector coordination group is based on PP Resolution 191 (Rev. Dubai 2018) to ensure mapping of activities and coordinate the discussions across the three sectors. The three advisory groups are interacting regularly, and it is important that they work in harmonization to identify the joint activity and the interests.

- The ISCG is important for harmonization, identifying the mechanisms to develop cooperation and helping developing countries in their engagements in ITU affairs. The mapping work is to identify topics of mutual interest and this is regularly published to foster the conversation, share resources, and avoid duplication of efforts within ITU coordination mechanisms..

- Some themes of mutual interest that have been identified include, for example climate change and accessibility, which lead to ITU-wide policy change.

Q (to all): "What would you like to see to happen in Europe region from your respective position? And what would you expect from the stakeholders to do?"

- **Ms. Blanca Gonzalez**: for Europe it is important to participate in the action plan. Europe is a bridge between different regions, and it is a model. On the theme of security, as well as many others important for the future, Europe is a model and its further engagement in TDAG would benefit the work of the ITU.

- **Ms Inga Rimkeviciene**: the countries should think of their priorities and expectations on standardization, development, and radiocommunication. CEPT is helping to coordinate ITU events, and it is important that countries act as a region, and everyone participates. Balkans and East European countries should be more active in order to understand what are their priorities. Europe is diverse and the diversity should be reflected.

- **Mr Fabio Bigi**: the ITU is a unique organization, telecommunication is evolving. Therefore, priorities should be identified as future is built and telecommunications are being adopted. Within the framework of ITU, we must understand how Europe can contribute in ensuring that new technologies can be widespread across the globe.

SESSION 2.1: WRITTEN CONTRIBUTIONS

18 contributions from 17 institutions were received as an input for the. All contributions are available at: http://www.itu.int/go/V2GG

Key points

- The UN resident coordinator in Moldova, Mr. Springett, reiterated that the Republic of Moldova's new government has created a cabinet level position for globalization and digital transformation, showcasing a strong commitment from the government to support **digitalization** process at the country level. Moldova is currently developing, through an inclusive and participatory process, a new digital roadmap. In this context, the government is working with the UN for inclusive digital services and business processes – such as e-health, digital e-government, digital payment infrastructure, data protection. Equity and accessibility must be fostered in order for digital services to be effectively used by all citizens, including hard reach groups.

- The Albanian representative for the Ministry of Infrastructure and energy has presented two proposals. The first is related to **broadband infrastructure** development, as well as **broadcasting and spectrum management**. Albania has carried out work with the ITU on this and sees potential for the rest of the region to follow suit.

- The second one concerns accessibility and affordability development, as well as participation in the digital economy. Supported by ITU, Albania is assessing the **digital skills** of the private sector and the general public, in order to develop a digital skills strategy for the general population. This is a challenge which may be common to many countries in Europe.

- Bosnia and Herzegovina also presented two contributions. **Accessibility**, affordability and skills development for digital inclusion and sustainable development is the first one. Thanks to capacity building enabled by ITU and Office for Europe, there are already some positive results. Despite this, during the Covid-19 crisis has hit the already-disadvantaged population, due to a lack of implementation of international convention, existing international framework and accessible products and services. Local authorities have implemented some policies and projects to foster accessibility, but there are still particular challenges to tackle:
  a. Policies must be developed, as there is a lack of engagement from policy makers in this area
  b. Accessibility should be made a priority for people with disability to access digital services
  c. Activities on accessibility should be accelerated and intensified.

- Through its second contribution, Bosnia and Herzegovina also raised the issue of **broadband mapping**. Bosnia and Herzegovina applied for ITU's technical assistance to develop an enabling environment for broadband mapping, as it needs to define the scope of broadband mapping and establish cooperation with stakeholders. Therefore, data must be collected and guidelines need to be devised in order for Bosnia and Herzegovina to align with new policies and best practices.

- Czech Republic also opened the presentation of the contribution reiterating the development of the **broadband infrastructure** as a priority. However, the Czech Republic's intervention and contribution has focussed on the **youth and the educational system** as the main areas of concern, as the youth located in rural areas often lack good connectivity. The

Czech Republic aims at further examining this situation, as digitization is crucial for the economy and as it is fundamental to build digital literacy at an early stage.

- Georgia submitted two contributions as well. In the first one, the country presented digital infrastructure development as one of their main priorities, outlining the work that is being supported by the European Commission to increase **affordable broadband** Internet and to develop a digital hub in the country. There is still the need to support the networking of less populated areas, as well as the development of **new technologies** – such as 5G. There is also the need to **develop skills and demand**, especially in rural areas.

- The other main challenge raised in the second contribution is to support the digital economy and society, and to develop **e-services and application by fostering innovation**. Georgia's priority is to develop AI and first industry revolution together with the ITU – which has also helped the country developing the innovation ecosystem snapshot, and the national online safety assessment report.

- Hungary is, as of now facing challenges with **implementing the 5G technology**. Therefore, the priority of the country is to implement the right financial, technical and social policies in order to develop the 5G network. In this regards, Hungary has also committed to support the organization of a regional conference on such topics in 2022.

- Lithuania's challenge is to make **eservices accessible for people with disabilities** and special needs, and seeks ITU's support to build a strategy for their regulator, as well as the development of new partnerships. Moreover, a contribution was submitted and presented by Lithuania on behalf of the Network of Women in Europe, which is an initiative to promote **gender balance** within and across ITU's engagements. It was claimed that the **NoW initiative** should be further promoted next year, and that informal meetings and national ones should be organized. Mentorship programs should also be arranged.

- Moldova's contribution focused on the challenge of implementing a **broadband mapping** system, to ensure that broadband becomes more affordable and public funds are used more effectively. The republic of Moldova therefore aims at developing a national strategy to develop the such system and therefore national infrastructure, and seeks ITU's support in this field.

- Montenegro submitted one written contribution highlighting two main challenges. The first was on **broadband and broadcasting spectrum management** and the need for a regional platform to discuss regulatory policy. The ITU-EKIP Regional Regulatory Forum for Europe is the **platform to enhance dialogue for policy making and regulation**, and will allow a regional follow-up to GSR proceedings. Montenegro has reiterated the commitment to support this process.

- The second challenge was the one regarding the **transition to IPv6**, where ITU has been supporting the country and where ITU is now proceeding with further supporting the country with the establishment of an IPv6 lab in the country. Montenegro proposed that the ITU replicates the same efforts regarding **IPv6 in other countries**.

- Serbia submitted a contribution covering two challenges of **digital inclusion and digital innovation ecosystems**. Regarding digital inclusion, the most evident challenges are those of digital literacy and connectivity. The work carried out in 2020 with ITU set the agenda: Serbia is now working to raise awareness on the need to address challenges related to **persons with disabilities**, and in parallel, to build **capacity and high-speed connectivity** through private investment in infrastructure development. Serbia is also enhancing digital literacy

and building **digital skills, as well the digitization of schools**. During 2020, the Republic of Serbia together with the ITU conducted Assessment on **Digital Accessibility** and is now developing a roadmap for implementation

- Serbia is also looking to develop the **digital innovation ecosystem**. By applying the ITU digital innovation framework as a rapid and straightforward means of analyzing, Serbia's fastmoving ICT/telecommunication landscape will be assessed in order to facilitate building of a competitive, sustainable, ICT-enabled economy.

- Turkey is working on cyber security, and in particular on developing digital capacity to increase the level of **preparedness for cyber incidents**. They are also seeking to enhance research, coordinate the different actors who have an impact on cyber security to form a strategy.

- The contribution from Ukraine highlighted challenges pertaining to Online Safety in the country. In particular challenges related to **content regulation** as well as **industry engagement** were raised.

- The contribution from **EaPeReg** outlined six areas of work that are priority challenges for EaP countries to be addressed. These are:
  - **Reducing the cost of network deployment**
  - **Broadband mapping**
  - **Cybersecurity**
  - **Emergency communications**
  - **UHF frequencies**

- The contribution from **Zero Project** highlighted several challenges encountered in the field of ICT accessibility including:
  - **Lack of mapping and data**: a potential solution would be a European digital interface and data repository for ICT accessibility indicators
  - **Disability inclusion practices lack of funding**: a potential solution would be to convene European venture capital sector in 2022 event, raising the prominence of disability inclusive innovations
  - **Accessible ICT products and services not having a public stage**: a potential solution would be to create a physical year round space in Vienna to showcase accessible ICT products and services.

SESSION 2.1: VERBAL CONTRIBUTIONS

- Estonia hosted the Tallin Digital Summit, in which the global agreement on ethical financing of infrastructure projects was discussed, under the theme of trusted connectivity. **Trusted connectivity** is a central theme for European Union and internationally, and the EU is investing on ethical financing methods and basic transparency.

- Moreover, Estonia, together with ITU and DIAL, are developing adaptable **building blocks for digital governance**. The GovStack initiative (led by ITU, Estonia, Germany, Dial) allows to share the blocks and to reduce the cost of building digital government.

- Germany claimed that **digital governance** is a key priority for Germany, and that GovStack is a key flagship that Germany is implementing with nine partner countries. There is a lack of coordination in the field of digital government transformation, which makes solutions less scalable. The blocks provide accessible and trusted services, and can be a solution for European countries to implement, including digital identity and payments.
- A partnership has been carried out with Ukraine within the framework of the GovStack initiative, particularly in fulfilment of the 2019 agenda for Digital Transformation of the public sector to make government services available online.
- Beyond GovStack, Ukraine's goal is to develop highspeed internet, broadband internet access. Therefore, it will focus on broadband mapping and digital schools are a key component of the plan. Moreover, Ukraine seeks to work with ITU to advance on **digital skills** and **strengthen child online protection**.
- The Generation Equality forum allowed to set key targets to be achieved by 2026. In particular, UN Women is aiming to reduce the gender gap through inclusive innovation and digital competency. Secondly, another target was to prevent online gender-based violence and discrimination. In the context of **online violence** in Europe being the highest between young people aged 18-29, studies have been carried out. It has been recognized that users with limited digital skills are more prone to be target of violence in their digital life. There must be stronger global digital security practices, and there is need to bring existing initiatives to all countries.
- Another point made was the need to improve **gender data for policy making** and there are tools to make this possible. Data collection, data analysis for policymaking must be more balanced. Partners must help women to develop their technologies and women's participation. At the corporate level and regional level these strategies must be developed. There is a need for a roadmap to implement commitments (e.g., national campaigns to raise awareness on gender gap) at regional and national level.
- Malta raised the issue of needing more resources for **digital literacy** and **online classes**, when it comes to **child online protection**. There is a need to pull resources to move beyond awareness, and create policies to prevent online abuse – also amongst minors themselves. There is need to assess the impact of abuse in studies, and also of statistics to understand the local scenario, so that the scale of the issue can be assessed fully. Malta calls upon the UN and ITU to allow for discussion on child protection and enhance discussion between different organizations. Digital development must be coupled with protection. Internet must be safe in order to have the development.
- ITU and FAO are collaborating on **digital agriculture** in 18 countries in Europe and Central Asia. They are working on understanding which digital technologies can be adapted and applied to agriculture, and how they can make a difference in agriculture sector, thereby enforcing digital technologies in the agriculture sector. Challenges include financial investment in this sector, as well as digital skills, and this requires sound policies. Digital excellence in agriculture is an example of how ITU and FAO are working to fill these gaps and to showcase good practices in the digitalization of agriculture.

SESSION 3: FURTHER DISCUSSION AND CLOSING

- Intel reiterated that the **development and deployment of new technologies** is fundamental, such as 5G, wifi 6, artificial intelligence, other kind of new technologies which are important

as countries accelerate their connectivity capacity. It is important to ensure that younger generations can benefit widely of these technologies.

- The European Union recognized that there are many projects taking place in Europe region, especially in neighborhood countries where the European Union is also planning to intervene. The European Union is committed to explore whether there are some ways to cooperate with ITU in those areas that of importance for the European Union.
- In February 2021, the European Union published the **digital decade policy** which outlines for the EU to support the **human-centric approach** to digital affairs across the EU, including most notably AI, where the EU is leading the policymaking and regulation discussion.

Closing, **Ms.** Eka Kubusidze, the Director of ICTs Department of the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, Georgia, on behalf of the hosting country, thanked all stakeholders for proactive engagement in the Regional Engagement Roundtable.

Mr Ponder concluded the proceedings by highlighting that all inputs will be taken into consideration for planning purposes for 2022. He has also highlighted that the planning process will build upon the service offering of the BDT Thematic Priorities, as well as other strategic documents, including ITU Digital Development Country Profiles, UN Common Country Analysis, EU Strategies, RCC Strategy etc. He also outlined some forthcoming activities for Q4 2021, as presented below. Closing, all stakeholders were thanked for close collaboration with ITU and contribution to this important exercise allowing to ensure that ITU is fit for purpose.

ITU Regional Engagement Roundtable for Europe

Upcoming Activities (Regional Initiatives)

Regional Activities
- 15th International Conference: Keeping Children and Young People Safe Online: ITU workshop on "Fostering a culture of child online protection: Roll-out of the Child Online Protection Guidelines in Europe", 24 September 2021
- ITU Regional Innovation Forum, 22-23 September 2021
- ITU-EKIP Regional Regulatory Forum for Europe, 27-28 September 2021
- Western Balkans Digital Summit, 11-13 October
- ITU Regional Forum on the Future of Television for Europe, 19 November 2021
- 5G Techritory 2021 and ITU side event, 22-25 November
- Digital Youth Jam, 3 December 2021

Reports
- ITU-UNICEF Connectivity in Education report
- ITU 5G implementation in non-EU countries of Europe
- ITU-FAO Digital Excellence in Agriculture Report
- ITU-FAO Getting Prepared to meet the EU Expectations on Digitalization in Agriculture: A Guide for Pre-accession Countries
- ITU Digital Skills Assessment Albania
- ITU Digital Skills good practice case study Ukraine
- ITU Digital Innovation Profile Georgia
- ITU Digital Innovation Profile Serbia

UN engagement
Continuous engagement in UN DTGECA, UN Brussels team, UN Sustainable Development System. Upcoming Data Protection Executive Trainings for RCs and UNCTs in Europe and Central Asia (November)

Country engagement
- Bosnia and Herzegovina (broadband mapping)
- Montenegro (Ipv6)
- North Macedonia (Child Online Protection)
- Ukraine (digital skills)
- Albania (digital skills and child online protection)
- Lithuania (accessibility)
- Georgia (innovation)
- Serbia (innovation)

Projects
- EMF limit levels and communication challenges (global project)
- Elaboration of ITU Mapping Guidelines based on the European experience
- GovStack
- E-waste
- Mhealth
- 6th Meeting of the ITU Centres of Excellence (CoE) Steering Committee for Europe
- Generation Connect Europe Youth Group
- Network of Women

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