MALTA COMMUNICATIONS AUTHORITY

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Fifth meeting of Working Group 4 (WG4)

On 19th December 2024, the MCA participated in the fifth meeting of WG4 (Integrity of the Information Space) of the European Board for Digital Services, held online. Discussions covered updates on recent and upcoming national elections, including presentations by CnaM, HAKOM, and BnetzA, as well as a focused update on the Romanian elections. The session also included a presentation and discussion on the DSA Elections Toolkit Draft. The meeting concluded with updates from the Chair, AOB, and closing remarks.

Fourth meeting of Working Group 2 (WG2)

Representatives from the MCA participated in the fourth meeting of WG2 (Working Together) of the European Board for Digital Services, held online on the 16th December, 2024. Key discussions included the Board's annual report under Article 35(2) DSA, the Annual Activity Report (Article 55 DSA), and complaints handling, with updates on findings, follow-up questionnaires, and next steps. The meeting concluded with updates on market studies.

Tenth meeting of the European Board for Digital Services

On 12th December, 2024, the MCA participated in the tenth meeting of the European Board for Digital Services, held online. Board members and observers shared updates on empowerment, ongoing cases, investigations, and other activities. The EC presented the latest developments and enforcement activities, along with updates on age verification work, including the outline of a reference framework. Discussions also focused on risk assessment reports, public consultation results on data access, and feedback from roundtables with researchers and civil society organisations. Further updates were shared on activities within Working Groups, and the session included a discussion on the role of platforms in elections.

Joint meeting of Working Groups 3 and 8 DSA

The MCA participated in the joint meeting of WG 3 and 8, held online, on 10th December, 2024. The session focused on the DSA Data Access Portal and its role in the delegated act. DG CONNECT provided an overview of the interaction between the Portal and AGORA, followed by previews of the DSA Data Access Portal and AGORA's data access features.

Third meeting of Working Group 6 (WG6)

Representatives from the MCA participated in the third meeting of WG 6 (Protection of Minors) of the European Board for Digital Services, held online on the 10th December, 2024. Discussions included updates on age verification, where the EC presented recent developments, followed by a Q&A session. The group also addressed the 5C typology of risks as part of the guidelines under Article 28 of the DSA. Additionally, updates on enforcement work were shared.

Technical Roundtable on the DSA Delegated Act on Data Access

On 9th December, 2024, the MCA participated in the Technical Roundtable on the DSA Delegated Act on Data Access. The roundtable, attended by DSCs, researchers, and VLOPs, aimed to present and discuss the draft Delegated Act, which is currently open for consultation, and gather feedback from key stakeholders involved in the data access mechanism. The discussions focused on the scope of the data to be shared and its relevance in studying systemic risks.

61st BEREC Plenary

The MCA participated in the ordinary meetings of Heads of national regulatory authorities hosted by AKOS in Ljubljana on 5th and 6th December, 2024. During the Board of Regulators meeting, several documents were adopted, including BEREC's Work Programme 2025; the BEREC Opinion on the market and technological developments and on their impact on the application of rights of end-users in the EECC; the BEREC Opinion on the methodology for the mapping of QoS coverage on Connectivity Indicators for the DDPP; the BEREC Report on the IP interconnection ecosystem.

A complete list of BEREC's public documents

adopted during its 61st ordinary meeting is available on the BEREC website.

Fifth meeting of Working Group 3 DSA Board (WG3)

On 6th December 2024, the MCA participated in the fifth meeting of WG3 (Content Moderation and Data Access) of the European Board for Digital Services. The meeting included a presentation by the EC on the draft outline of the Trusted Flagger Guidelines, followed by discussions on selected key issues related to the guidelines.

Ad-hoc meeting of the European Board for Digital Services

The MCA participated in an ad-hoc meeting of the European Board for Digital Services on 6th December 2024. The meeting addressed Romania's elections from a DSA perspective, considering recently declassified documents. Discussions involved DSCs, the European Commission, and observers, focusing on TikTok's obligations under the DSA during the elections.

88th Radio Spectrum Committee Meeting

The meeting was held on the 4th December, and considered various matters intended to harmonise radio spectrum within the European Union. These focused on short range devices, the shared use of the 3.8 - 4.2 GHz band for terrestrial systems capable of providing wireless broadband services, intelligent transport systems and radio altimeters.

Trusted Flagger Application by FSWS

On 4th December 2024, the Foundation for Social Welfare Services (FSWS) was invited to give a presentation on their submission to become a trusted flagger specialising on the protection of minors online under Article 22 of the DSA. Deborah Vassallo, Safer Internet Administrator, provided an overview of the hotline operations and the BeSmartOnline! project.

Standard Procedure for Crisis Protocols

The MCA met with Permanent Secretary of MEEP and MHSE, on 4th December 2024, to discuss the establishment of a standard procedure for crisis protocols and responses under the DSA. MCA and MHSE agreed to pursue this matter further through bilateral discussions.

RSPG Sub-Group Meetings

During the month of December, the MCA participated in the sub-group meetings of the RSPG concerning the upper 6GHz band and direct-to-device connectivity.

Meeting with MedDMO

On 3rd December 2024, the MCA participated in a meeting with representatives of the Mediterranean Digital Media Observatory (MedDMO) to discuss potential collaboration. The discussion focused on MedDMO's work in countering disinformation, its monitoring of the Code of Practice on Disinformation, and how these activities align with the MCA's responsibilities as Malta's DSC under the DSA.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Empowering ICT Executives in Web Accessibility

MCA Strategy Day

On the 18th December, 2024, staff from the Malta Communications Authority (MCA) came together for an insightful Strategy Day meeting. The event featured a comprehensive presentation of the Business Plan for 2025, delivered by the Chief of Policy and Planning, Damian Gatt. This roadmap for the upcoming year highlighted the Authority's strategic goals and key initiatives, setting a clear vision for continued success. The meeting also touched on the importance of well-being in the workplace, with a brief presentation on mental health initiatives by the Richmond Foundation aimed at fostering a positive work environment.

The day concluded with a heartfelt address from MCA's CEO, Jesmond Bugeja, who expressed his gratitude to all staff for their dedication and hard work throughout the year. His words of encouragement inspired the team to embrace the opportunities and challenges of the new year with renewed determination.

The MCA staff members are excited about the path ahead and remain committed to achieving the set goals while supporting the well-being of the team.

Following the success of last year's sessions, the Malta Communications Authority (MCA), in collaboration with the eSkills Malta Foundation and the Faculty of ICT at the University of Malta, recently hosted a series of workshops tailored for public sector ICT executives.

Held on the 25th of November and 9th of December, these interactive sessions provided a comprehensive overview of web accessibility, equipping participants with essential knowledge and practical tools to embed accessibility into every stage of an online service's lifecycle, ensuring truly inclusive digital experiences.

At the MCA, we remain committed to empowering public sector professionals in delivering inclusive digital services.

PUBLICATIONS

Monthly Newsletter - November 2024

Published On 17/12/2024 News

Update to the List of Test and Trial Licences

Published On 16/12/2024 News

Report on the Outcome of the Monitoring of the Web Accessibility Directive (2022-2024)

Published On 16/12/2024 News

Career Opportunity: Logistic Support Person

Published On 10/12/2024 Recruitment Jobsplus permit no: 1050/2024

MCA CEO Mr. Jesmond Bugeja Appointed to ITU Advisory Body on Submarine Cable Resilience

Published On 03/12/2024 News

LEGAL UPDATES

Litigation:

5th December 2024 - Sitting before the Administrative Review Tribunal in the case:

On the 5th December 2024, a sitting was held before the Administrative Review Tribunal in relation to the appeal filed by GO plc whereby GO is contesting MCA's Notification of re-assessment of the wholesale fixed access markets(s) in Malta published by the MCA on the 30 July 2024.
During this sitting Damian Gatt gave evidence in relation to MCA's preliminary plea of nullity of the appeal filed by GO.
Appeal was adjourned to the 20 January 2025 for continuation of evidence on this plea and GO's request for the issue of interim measures by the Tribunal

MEDIA ACTIVITY

Television:

Date: 11.12.2024

Channel: NET TV

Programme: Bejnietna ma' Steph

Topic: Quality of Internet Services & End User Rights

Participant: Matthew Farrugia