

WTSA 16 Report on Consumer Protection issues

Contributed by: Petko Kantchev

Internet Society Chapter of Bulgaria

Foreword

During my first participation at WTSA 2012 I chaired an ad-hoc group meeting on Spam. Surprisingly that meeting was well attended by delegates and I enjoyed a top class spirit of mutual understanding. Indeed, that experience helped me better understand the environment of developing countries and why Spam was a real danger for the Internet's operation thus resulting in the adoption of Resolution 52- "Countering and combating spam."

Earlier this year at a TDAG meeting, I met two delegates from the RCC community and shared with them my thoughts on the lack of consideration of consumer protection issues at ITU study groups. I emphasized that future ITU Recommendations(standards), reports and publications produced by Study Groups of both ITU T and ITU-R sectors, encapsulating innovatively consumer protection issues, will be beneficial to users/consumers, regulatory authorities, service providers/operators and manufacturing industry thus leading to win-win situation.

In preparation for this WTSA 16 I was delighted to discover "the early bird" contribution WTSA 16/47(Add.13) Draft new resolution [RCC-3] entitled "Studies concerning the protection of users of telecommunication/ICT services."

Therefore, the above helps to understand why I was interested in following the consumer protection issues at WTSA-16.

Furthermore, I was also delighted to note the adoption in Hammamet of updated Resolution 52 "Countering and combating spam."

Consumer protection at WTSA-16

Committee 4 was appointed the Convener of Drafting Group "Draft new Resolution [RCC-3]: Studies concerning the protection of users of telecommunication/ICT services." The Chair-person demonstrated tact, charm and great ability to steer the Drafting Group meetings. To a large extent she helped achieve positive results.

The sessions on the draft new resolution [RCC-3] were held on Thursday 27 and Friday 28 October 2016 and attended by some 40 delegates/observers. There were many requests for clarification and few proposals for amendments. Two delegates from the RCC community clarified certain requests for clarification and committed to bring back to their community the proposals made at the Drafting Group meetings.

As a note, a delegate asked where the definition of the term ICT could be found within the ITU. It tempted me to ask for the floor and state that such definition is not yet formally defined but the term "telecommunication/ICT" has been considered and adopted in the title of Programme 2 at the WTDC 2002, Istanbul, Turkey. (Nota Bene: in fact, my own research as ITU Focal Point on this

Programme prior to WTDC-02 development conference revealed that such term has not been defined neither by UN nor by any specialized UN agency).

My statement clarified the issue and the title remained as submitted.

After number of proposals for modification were made I was briefly consulted by a Member State delegate to seek the floor again. This time in my statement I recommended that the document not interpret Resolution 196 of ITU Plenipotentiary Conference [Busan 2014] and that it should reflect the correct definition of SDOs. I proposed the following modified text which was accepted:

“instructs the Director of the telecommunication standardization Bureau.....

as follows:

invites the Director of the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau

- 1 to assist the Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau in implementation of the Resolution 196 [Busan2014] of the Plenipotentiary Conference;
- 2 to strengthen relations with other standards development organizations (SDOs) involved in resolving issues of protection of telecommunication/ICT service users,”

In summary the outcome of said Drafting Group meetings was taken into account in document WTSA-16/DT/73.

As stated in section 6.1 of Document WTSA 16/83 of the 4th meeting of the Plenary of Committee 4, the Convener reported that while the work was completed, the report was still being reviewed by the participants. The COM4 Chairman welcomed the presentation of the outcome at the next COM4 meeting on Monday 31 October.”

Revision 1 of Document DT/73, 31 October 2016, includes the modifications agreed to at the fifth COM4 meeting.

Furthermore, as stated in section 4.10 of Document DT/95, 1 November 2016, and reproduced in Document WTSA-16/90, the drafting Group on draft new Res.[RCC-3] on consumer protection met and the convener, Ms Memiko Otsuki (Japan), reported in DT/43 that the group was almost able to reach agreement, with two square brackets left, as seen in DT/73. After quick discussion, a compromise was found and the square brackets were removed, as found in its Revision 1. COM4 agreed to send the text of draft new Res. [RCC-3] as found in DT/73(Rev.1) to COM5 for editorial review and transmission to Plenary for formal approval.

It was highlighted that there may be financial implications in this Resolution related to assistance to the Director BDT for implementation of Plenipotentiary 2014 Resolution 196 in its invites to TSB Director 1. The outcome of the editorial review Draft New Resolution [COM4/2] “Studies concerning the protection of users of telecommunication/information and communication technology services” is to be found on pages 6 to 8 of Document WTSA16/98

This document was presented and finally approved by the 3rd Plenary Meeting on Wednesday, 2 November 2016.

In accordance with ITU tradition and practice, the Editorial Committee will meet after some time after the WTSA 16 and will assign numbers to new Resolutions, hence the consumer protection Resolution [COM4/2] will have its number in due time in not too distant future.

Acknowledgements

I was honoured to be sponsored by Internet Society to attend the entire World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA-16) from 25 October to 3 November 2016 held in Medina, Hammamet, Tunisia.

The ISOC delegation included representatives of Chapters from various parts of the world, but the divergence of tradition and culture resulted in competent, integrated and a united team. No doubt we left our imprint in the outcome of this complicated and difficult Assembly. I was sure that at the end we would achieve consensus, though by exhaustion, and this Assembly would be successful.

Thanks all for the perfect organization, support and availability at any day any time of all colleagues, members of ISOC delegation. I would be delighted to be a part in a similar project!