

# National Policy on Electronic Communications

## (National Telecommunications Policy)

### 1. Introduction

The National Policy on Electronic Communications („NPEC“) for the next years defines the strategy of the development of electronic communications networks and services in Slovakia, particularly in the field of improvement of the legal framework, strengthening of the independent regulatory body, development of a competitive environment, securing and protection of end users rights, support of the development of information society services and international co-operation.

NPEC follows with the Telecommunications Policy of SR for the years 2000 to 2002 and with the tasks resulting from the EU accession process, international agreements and the Slovak Republic membership in international organisations, as well as with other tasks related to the development of international relations and international co-operation, including the *eEurope+* programme. It takes into account the EU requirements given by the new regulatory framework for electronic communications networks and services, published in the Official Journal of the EC on 24 April 2002 and 31 July 2002 („new regulatory framework of the EU“).

NPEC is based on the actual state of liberalisation of the telecommunications market in Slovakia, particularly of liberalisation of the basic voice service from 1 January 2003.

Electronic communications are a new term that has arisen during the ongoing convergence of telecommunications, media and IT sectors. The term of electronic communications is also used in the terminology of the whole set of directives of the New Regulatory Framework of the EU. Consequences of the convergence process affect not only the scope and structure of provided communications services but also the way of business and the quality of life of citizens. The current nature of communications platforms, particularly of Internet, opens the door to the integration of world economy and brings tasks and challenges for Slovakia as the EU candidate country.

Electronic communications are the key factor on the way to information society and also create basic conditions for the access of the undertakings, public institutions and individuals to modern communications networks and services in the framework of world-wide information infrastructure. The possibility to use high-quality and affordable communications services should be given to all, so as to avoid anyone's exclusion from the information society. Another important attribute of the offer of communications services is sufficiently secured data protection that meets the requirements of customers and helps to build the confidence in the new digital environment. The national communications policy provides decisive impulses for the attainment of these objectives by stimulation of competition on electronic communications markets.

### Basis

The legal framework of the SR in the area of telecommunications is determined by the Act No 195/2000 Coll. on Telecommunications (in effect from 1 July 2000) and its amendment by the Act No 308/2000 Coll. on Broadcasting and Retransmission of 14 September 2000. According to the Act on Telecommunications the state administration in telecommunications is performed by the Ministry of Transport, Posts and Telecommunications of the Slovak Republic („MDPT SR“) as the central body of the state

administration and by the Telecommunications Office of the Slovak Republic („TU SR“) as the state administration body and the National Regulatory Authority („NRA“).

TU SR is headed by the president elected and withdrawn by the National Council of the Slovak Republic („NR SR“) at the proposal of the Government. The Telecommunications Office of the SR is financed from the budget chapter of the MDPT SR. The main task of the TU SR is to execute the state regulation of telecommunications activities including price regulation. In addition to the state regulation of telecommunications activities, the TU SR ensures international relations in the field of telecommunications at the level of regulatory bodies, co-operates with the Council for Broadcasting and Retransmission and with the Antimonopoly Office of the SR, imposes sanctions and carries out other activities in compliance with the Telecommunications Act.

Adoption of the Telecommunications Act opened the way to the privatisation of the public telecommunications network operator Slovenské telekomunikácie, a.s., and created basic conditions for the successful completion of the liberalisation process by 1 January 2003.

The closure of Chapter No 19 Telecommunications and Information Technologies in the framework of negotiations with the EU in May 2001 means the confirmation on the part of the EU that the SR met requirements in this area put on the candidate country before its accession to the EU.

The Slovak Government declares the development of informatisation as one of priority tasks and adheres to the common initiative eEurope+ of the EU candidate countries. The area of informatics in the Slovak Republic is covered by the Ministry of Education of the SR, and the telecommunications sector actively participates in the development of information society in Slovakia. Following the approval of the bill modifying and amending the Act No 575/2001 Coll. on Organisation of the Government Activity and on Organisation of the Central State Administration that should enter into force on 1 April 2003, competencies in the area of informatics will be transferred from the Ministry of Education of the SR to the Ministry of Transport, Posts and Telecommunications of the SR.

## **2. Objectives of the National Policy on Electronic Communications**

The primary strategic objective of the State policy in the area of electronic communications is the satisfaction of needs of the Slovak economy, requirements of natural and legal personalities and interests of the State in provision of quality, reliable and widely accessible services of electronic communications within a scope corresponding to the developed EU states and the integration of the Slovak Republic into information society of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. An important part of this primary strategic objective is support of the equalisation of the level of electronic communications in the SR with the European context. To attain the primary strategic objective it is necessary to achieve the following partial goals.

### **2.1 Harmonisation of the Legislative Framework**

For the successful integration of the SR to the single European market it is necessary to apply the same rules as those used by the EU member countries, and consequently to transpose the regulatory framework of the EU in the area of electronic communications into the Slovak legislation.

This framework includes five directives relating to electronic communications networks and services (adopted by the European Parliament and the Council on 7 March 2002 and 12 July 2002): Directive 2002/19/EC on Access and Interconnection, Directive 2002/20/EC on the Authorisation, Framework Directive 2002/21/EC, Directive 2002/22/EC on Universal Service, Directive 2002/58/EC on Privacy and Electronic Communications.

These directives should be incorporated into the legislation of the EU member countries in the second half of the year 2003.

The regulatory framework of the EU endeavours at a uniform, flexible and harmonised approach to regulation of electronic communications networks and services.

The uniformity of approach is reflected in the fact that the new regulatory framework of the EU, unlike the existing framework, introduces the same way of regulation for different types of networks and services in the area of electronic communications. It is so-called technologically neutral approach.

The flexibility is reflected in the fact that the level of regulation can be flexibly changed according to the needs. In the case of a sufficient level of competition on relevant markets the level of the sector specific regulation can be decreased. In the case of a not effective competition, a higher level of the sector specific regulation is required in order to provide the maximum support to competition on relevant markets based on analyses of undertakings with a significant market power ("SMP"). The undertakings designated by the national regulatory authority as undertakings with the SMP are subject to a higher level of regulation.

The harmonisation is reflected in the fact that in all EU member states the same rules are introduced, whereby the execution of regulation supposes a higher level of co-operation among the national regulatory authorities, as well as co-operation with the European Commission.

The EU regulatory framework provides the national regulatory body with a sufficient flexibility in regulation of communications markets aiming at achieving effective competition which should be reflected in a wide offer of services with required quality and for affordable prices. The new regulatory framework gradually substitutes the sector specific legislation by the principles of competition protection.

**The priority task is to prepare the Governmental Bill on Electronic Communications transposing the new EU regulatory framework so that it could be approved prior to accession of the Slovak Republic to the EU and could enter into force not later than on the day of our accession to the EU (the planned term is 1 January 2004).**

## **2.2 State Regulation**

The way of the state regulation will be adapted to the regulatory framework for electronic communications. The system of regular evaluation of the competition level on the market in electronic communications, allowing current updating of the scope of required specific regulation in relation to general regulation of competition, will be constituted. It is necessary to gear up for a system of relations between the national regulatory authority and the European Commission, as well as to relations with national regulatory authorities of the EU member countries.

The flexible system of electronic communications regulation, updated depending on the development of the market, technologies and services, requires the prompt exchange of information among the regulatory body, market players and all interested parties. The permanent possibility of communications with relevant market players is an important instrument for improvement of performance of the regulatory body, for consultation on regulatory decisions, for the utilisation of initiatives of the market players and for the fast propagation of information.

From the point of view of regulation the transparency of regulatory procedures will be maintained and increased. The regulatory body will publish and increasingly consult with the

public the drafts of important decisions, whereby such decisions will be adequately explained. More emphasis will be put on the market analyses and on regulatory principles based on such analyses. For that purpose the relevant documents of EU will be used as much as possible which will require an intensive co-operation with other state administration bodies, particularly with the Antimonopoly Office of the SR.

The effective application of rules of the regulatory framework for electronic communications requires the constitution of a strong and independent regulatory authority equipped with appropriate competencies and powers for execution of regulation activities.

**The objective in the area of the state regulation is to strengthen the existing powers and extend the competencies of the NRA by the competencies given by the EU regulatory framework on electronic communications, that enable flexible reaction to the market needs.**

The National Policy on Electronic Communications was formulated by the Ministry of Transport, Posts and Telecommunications of the SR that is the central body of the state administration for this area. The objectives of the National Policy on Electronic Communications are implemented by the NRA. In order to achieve the transparency in defining and pursuing the objectives of the NPEC it is necessary to separate the regulation execution from the function of the policy-maker. To achieve full separation of the regulatory body from the function of the State as the policy-maker in electronic communications, as well as to reach the independence of undertakings carrying out activities, it is necessary to constitute the system of independent financing of the regulatory body.

**The objective in the area of strengthening of the NRA independence is to separate the financing of the regulatory body so that it is financed independently from the Ministry of Transport, Posts and Telecommunications of SR or from other central body of the state administration, not later than on the day of accession of the SR to the EU.**

In the area of electronic communications it is necessary to effectively separate the function of the State as the policy-maker in electronic communications from activities related to the execution of the property rights of operators of electronic communications networks and services to avoid the risk of potential conflict of interests.

**Further objective is to transfer the execution of the shareholder's rights of the MDPT SR in ST, a.s. to another central body of the state administration (e. g. Ministry of Finance of the SR) or other state administration body so as to maintain the influence of the State and to simultaneously achieve full independence of the position of the national policy-maker in electronic communications from the entities regulated in the electronic communications markets in Slovakia.**

In general, it is desirable to aim at the reduction of costs of the state administration, even in the area of regulation. The information and communications market in the Slovak Republic is relatively small in comparison with total market in the EU. Therefore it will be necessary to continuously examine possibilities of the optimisation of regulation costs. With regard to the development on the Slovak market, one solution could be to integrate a number of bodies, dealing mostly with regulation of electronic communications. The reason is to reach administrative savings, resulting from the integration of a number of entities into one and simultaneously to preserve their mission. It would be a support of the closest possible co-operation of these units in the market regulation, taking into account the specific nature of

technical, economic and content regulation. The technical and economic regulation currently concern mainly TU SR and the Postal Office, partially also the Council for Broadcasting and Retransmission. The content regulation is now the responsibility of the Council for Broadcasting and Retransmission. The basis for such an integrated regulatory body could be the integration of TU SR, the Council for Broadcasting and Retransmission and the Postal Office whose scope of activities is often closely related and in the future it could form a compact unit, effectively covering the needs of citizens and the State.

**The objective is to constitute a regulatory body that could arise by integration of the Council for Broadcasting and Retransmission and the Telecommunications Office of the SR, and - if required - the Postal Office.**

### **2.3 Development of Competition**

The most important strategic task of NPEC is to support the development and maintenance of a free competition. To ensure this task it is necessary to respect the relevant EU documents, particularly the Framework Directive 2002/21/EC, the Directive 2002/20/EC on the Authorisation and the Directive 2002/19/EC on Access and Interconnection.

In compliance with the principles of the regulatory framework for electronic communications it is necessary to ensure that the access to the market in electronic communications be as simple as possible and that conditions of the access to the market be transparent, fair and non-discriminatory. The means for the attainment of these objectives is the consistent implementation of the Directive 2002/20/EC on the Authorisation into the Slovak legislation.

According to the EU regulatory framework individual licences will be replaced by general authorisations. By general authorisations the entrepreneur will be given the right to provide electronic communications services and to operate electronic communications networks, to install equipment on public or private property, to conduct negotiations on access and interconnection with other operators of electronic communications networks, as well as the right to be designated as provider of universal service.

Granting specific individual rights is limited to cases requiring the utilisation of radio frequencies and numbers. If requirements for radio frequencies exceed the possibilities of their satisfaction it will be necessary to introduce adequate and transparent procedures for granting frequencies, to avoid any discrimination and to optimise utilisation of this limited source. Fees for utilisation of radio frequencies and numbers are applied as the instrument for assurance of optimal utilisation of such sources and for the coverage of eligible costs of management of the respective sources.

**The short-term objective in the area of facilitation of entry to the market is to incorporate the Directive 2002/20/EC on the Authorisation for Electronic Communications Networks and Services into the Slovak legislation. It is important to support the entry of new undertakers to the market in compliance with principles of the new regulatory framework of the EU and to support investments in infrastructure to ensure competition sustainable from the long-term horizon.**

An open and competitive market excludes the existence of any limitations, preventing the undertakings to agree on access and mutual interconnection. Undertakings that are asked for access and interconnection have the right and the obligation to mutually agree and sign contracts. If negotiations fail NRA should be authorised to intervene in the interest of users.

In order to maintain competition on the market, the NRA may impose obligations to undertakings that have been (on the basis of an analysis of the relevant market) designated as undertakings with significant market power. Also, the NRA should cancel the imposed obligations if the market analysis shows that the level of competition on the relevant market is adequate. Based on experience from developed EU countries, at the beginning of competition on liberalised market of electronic communications it is necessary to apply the principle of asymmetric regulation, until the period when full competition is reached on the relevant markets. The purpose of the asymmetric regulation is to support entrance of competitors to the market.

In order to avoid excessive regulation, the Directive 2002/19/EC defines the maximum set of obligations regarding access and interconnection that may be imposed to undertakings with significant market power, such as transparency, non-discrimination, separated accounting, price regulation, access to specified network components and their common utilisation.

**The short-term objective in the area of the development of competitive environment is to incorporate the Directive 2002/19/EC on Access and Interconnection into the Slovak legislation. The long-term objective is to ensure integrity of the network and interoperability of services in compliance with principles of the new regulatory framework of the EU.**

### **3.4 Universal Service and Protection of End User's Rights**

A special provision in the area of protection of rights of electronic communications users is the institute of universal service ("US"), specified by the Directive 2002/22/EC on Universal Service and on User's Rights. This directive also defines the minimum set of services that should be available in determined quality for an affordable price to everybody, including special categories of users with low income and disabled persons, regardless of the geographic position.

An increased attention should be paid to the affordability of universal service. The requirement of affordability may cause that the price of US will not cover eligible costs of its provision. Calculation of cost and the way of financing of US should be solved in compliance with the Directive 2002/22/EC on Universal Service and on User's Rights. The NRA should ensure the transparency of the US financing.

To secure protection of the end user rights, the NRA needs competencies allowing regulation interventions against undertakings with significant market power within the scope defined by the Directive 2002/22/EC in the area of price regulation of end user services, determination of the offer of the minimum set of leased lines, selection and pre-selection of the operator providing electronic communications services.

The Directive 2002/22/EC defines significant end user rights such as the right to sign contract with the operator, transparency and publication of information on prices, tariffs and quality of services, availability of information about subscriber's numbers, permanent and free access to emergency call services, including free access to the single European emergency call number "112", and the right of number portability.

In order to secure defined general interests, the obligation of distribution of radio and television broadcasting of specified channels may be imposed to undertakings providing electronic communications services in the area of transmission of TV and R broadcasting.

**The short-term objective in the area of protection of end user rights is to incorporate the Directive 2002/22/EC on Universal Service and on User Rights into the Slovak legislation. In compliance with principles of the EU regulation framework and**

**the EC recommendations the priority task is to support provision of any justified requirement for universal service in requested quality and for an affordable price.**

### **3.5 Economic Use of Frequency Spectrum**

Economic utilisation of frequency spectrum is conditioned by continuous updating of the National Table of Frequency Spectrum ("NTFS") that determines allocations of frequency bands to the individual radiocommunications services, and by the plan of use of frequency spectrum, that determines assignment of frequencies to the individual operators. NTFS and the plan of frequency spectrum use should be continuously harmonised with European documents, particularly with documents of CEPT ECC (Electronic Communications Committee), until 2001 marked as ERC (European Radiocommunication Committee) documents, and with recommendations of the ITU. From this aspect, the basic reference document is the Report ERC 25 containing the European Table of Frequency Spectrum within the range 9 kHz to 275 GHz.

**The objective in the area of harmonisation of frequency tables is to reach full compliance of the National Table of Frequency Spectrum with the European Table of Frequency Spectrum not later than in the year 2008.**

The broad development of some radiocommunications services depends on release of further frequency bands currently used by the Ministry of Defence of the SR (MO SR). The task is to continue in releasing these bands in compliance with the ITU Radio Regulations, the European Table of Frequency Spectrum and the Decision No 676/2002/EC on a Regulatory Framework for Radio Spectrum Policy in the European Community. Following the accomplishment of the tasks of the "Telecommunications Policy for the years 2000 to 2002" it is necessary to release the required frequency bands for provision of mobile telecommunications services in compliance with the Resolution No 418 of the Government of 9 May 2001.

From the point of view of frequencies, the possibility of the development of T-DAB broadcasting is very closely related to the development of TV broadcasting in the DVB-T system. The introduction of DVB-T broadcasting will allow to release the 12th TV channel (222-230 MHz) for the purposes of radio broadcasting and to achieve the nation-wide coverage.

**The objective in the area of frequency spectrum use is - in co-operation of MDPT SR, MO SR and NRA - to achieve the release of frequency bands for terrestrial digital television and radio broadcasting in the DVB-T and T-DAB systems, respectively.**

#### **3.5.1 Satellite Communications**

From the point of view of further development in the area of satellite communications the following sectors are perspective for the Slovak Republic:

- networks of Very Small Aperture Terminals (VSAT), Satellite News Gathering (SNG);
- wide-band satellite communications, multimedia satellite communications.

The World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC 2000) accepted new plans for satellite TV and radio broadcasting. On the basis of the allocation according to WRC 2000, the common satellite orbital position 12,8°W was reserved for the Slovak Republic, the Czech Republic, Croatia and Hungary. This position allows to execute the digital broadcasting

covering not only territories of these countries but also most of the European territory. It concerns the total number of 35 channels, allowing to transmit up to 280 digital TV programmes. Each of the countries mentioned above has the right to decide on the use of 8 channels. The remaining three channels can be used based on their common approval.

**The short-term objective in the area of satellite TV and radio broadcasting is to ensure the optimal use of assigned channels for needs of the SR. From the point of view of the satellite communications perspective it is necessary to support its development.**

### **3.6 Safe Communications**

The main objective in the area of communications safety and personal data processing is to support protection of public communications data and to protect private and legal interests of subscribers and users of public communications services:

- \* Providers of public electronic communications services should take appropriate technical and organisational measures to protect safety of their services, with regard to the network safety, together with the network provider where necessary, that will secure the level of safety adequate to given risk; in the interest of damage prevention they also ought to inform subscribers and users about possible safety risks of the relevant communications,
- \* Service providers offering publicly available electronic communications services via Internet are obliged to inform the users and the subscribers about measures they have adopted to protect the communications safety (special software, coding, encrypting etc.);
- \* Where electronic communications network, in addition to transmitted data, are able to process also the data indicating the position of users or subscribers of the services, such data can be processed only if they remain anonymous, or with consent of the users or the subscribers and up to the extent and for the time period indispensable for provision of the value-added service;
- \* Service providers are obliged to provide the subscribers with an adequate protection against disturbance endangering their privacy by unsolicited calls and fax messages, electronic mail or other forms of communications for the purposes of direct marketing;
- \* Protection of personal data and privacy of the users of publicly available electronic communications services should be independent of configuration of the components necessary for the service provision and of the distribution of necessary functions among such components.

**The short-term objective in the area of personal data processing and protection of privacy is to incorporate the Directive 2002/58/EC on Personal Data Processing and on Protection of Privacy in the Sector of Electronic Communications into the Slovak legislation.**

In the case of any unpredictable crisis (such as a natural disaster) inside the State causing the mass malfunction of traditional communications links, it is desirable to install as fast as possible the substitutionary communications links based on the rules defined in



advance, what is the task of the national crisis management. The rules of installation of substitutionary communications should be determined before the crisis occurs, whereupon the essence of crisis management consists in preparation to crisis situations. When a crisis occurs, the procedure is performed according to the decisions of the crisis management, utilising the procedures, plans and means which have been prepared in advance.

**The objective in the area of national crisis management is to ensure the elaboration of these issues in the area of electronic communications networks in relation to general legislation concerning the State management in crisis in peacetime.**

In the framework of international co-operation in crisis in peacetime the Slovak Republic ratified the Tampere Convention on the Provision of Telecommunication Resources for Disaster Mitigation and Relief Operations.

**The short-term objective in the area of international crisis management in relation to the ratification of the Tampere Convention is to implement this agreement in the SR.**

### **3.7 Support of the Development of Information Society Services**

The development and the offer of multimedia services on electronic communications market is particularly the subject of business activities of the network operators and the service providers. The quality of offered content for adequate price is the decisive stimulation. However, in this area which is important for the development of information society services and advanced communications infrastructure, the Government should co-operate with the private sector, monitor this area, guide and stimulate it by regulatory interventions, where required.

#### **3.7.1 Access to Internet for All**

Internet is a dynamically developing instrument for access to information. With regard to the development of services provided through Internet and its importance for information society building, it will be necessary to stimulate the development of connection to this network, especially from the point of view of quality of building of public access points to Internet and the price of connection. It is necessary to keep in mind that a barrier for the public to access to Internet could also be the high price of terminal equipment (PC) or accessories required for the access, particularly to multimedia services.

The Act on Electronic Communications should also stimulate the mass development of high-speed access to Internet.

**An important priority in the area of access to Internet for all is to achieve a significant reduction of tariffs for access to Internet by strengthening competition on the market. Further, it will be necessary to determine the ways of measuring and benchmarking of indicators, reflecting the development of Internet at both national and European levels. An important objective is to support the mass propagation of high-speed access to Internet.**

#### **3.7.2 Broadband Access**

The latest reforms in the area of regulation of electronic networks and services market should encourage the development of fast broadband access communications networks. Following the achievement of the mass propagation of the narrow-band access to Internet it is desirable to stimulate the very fast access to Internet and to multimedia services in compliance with the *eEurope/eEurope+* programme.

The broadband connection will considerably increase the speed of data transmission which will result in a higher quality of Internet access, in user-friendly environment for the customers and in enabling usage of a wide range of multimedia applications.

The broadband technologies will increase productivity of labour and employment. The higher effectiveness will be achieved thanks to the access to information at any time and at any place. The increase of productivity can be however achieved only by restructuring the economic behaviour and by utilisation of new technologies: by adaptation of relevant processes in undertakings, on-line access to public services and development of skills. The implementation of the broadband potential requires that everyone has the opportunity to benefit from it (health system, education, business, state administration and public administration). An important place should be also reserved to the new communications platforms not requiring a PC. It concerns particularly the interactive digital television and the 3G mobile systems which opens the possibilities for access to services on several platforms.

**In the area of support of the broadband access it is necessary to pay a special attention to elimination of barriers by promotion of competition, to the use of frequency spectrum and to support of broadband access in rural regions as well.**

### **3.7.3 Digital TV and Radio Broadcasting**

Whereas further development of terrestrial analogue TV and R broadcasting in Slovakia - like in most European countries - is not possible because of the occupancy of frequency spectrum, it is necessary to change to the digital broadcasting system which is dealt with by several European governmental and non-governmental organisations and associations (e. g. CEPT, EBU, ITU, DVB, WorldDAB Forum, DIGITAG).

From Slovakia point of view it is necessary to concentrate on implementation of objectives according to the document "Strategy and Technical Criteria for the Introduction of Terrestrial Digital TV Broadcasting in DVB-T System in Slovakia", approved by the Resolution No. 589 of the Slovak Government of 27 June 2001.

From the European point of view, conditions for the development of terrestrial digital radio broadcasting in T-DAB system were created by adoption of revised Wiesbaden Arrangement (designated as WT95/MA-02) and the Maastricht Arrangement (designated as MA-02). In these documents there are three frequency blocks reserved to all countries, allowing the nation-wide coverage by at least 18 radio programmes.

**The objectives in the area of terrestrial digital TV and radio broadcasting are:**

- \* **To create conditions for implementation of DVB-T pilot projects (not later than in 2004) and T-DAB pilot projects (in 2006) for selected locations;**
- \* **To create conditions allowing to start the regular DVB-T broadcasting as soon as possible;**
- \* **To complete the change from analogue to digital TV broadcasting by 2015.**

### **3.7.4 Research and Technical Development in the Area of Electronic Communications**

The scope of issues related to the effective application of liberalised electronic communications networks and connected services in information society requires a professionally mature and sophisticated scientific and research background at the national level able to guarantee effective connection of the national development and innovative activities to the European and international trends.

In the framework of research and technical development in the area of electronic communications, such a structure of research is required that would ensure support of objectives of the National Policy on Electronic Communications.

In the framework of these activities it is necessary to ensure:

- \* operational monitoring and transfer of global scientific and research knowledge in the area of electronic communications to the national environment of the SR;
- \* readiness of the national environment for optimal integration of new progressive technologies to the existing network infrastructure;
- \* support of the development of human resources prepared for active and independent participation in international co-operation and for projection new knowledge into the education process;
- \* support of research projects aimed at utilisation of electronic communications in all areas of constitution of information society (development of databases and access to advanced Internet services, support of production and interactive utilisation of multimedia contents, support of new forms of electronic co-operation);
- \* harmonisation and subsequent application of international standardisation and legislative documents to the national environment;
- \* flexible and active response to international challenges, development initiatives and scientific and research programmes of the EU.

**The primary task in the area of research and technical development, as one of the objectives of the National Policy on Electronic Communications, is particularly the financial support of the state research projects aimed at supporting the broadband access.**

**From the point of view of fulfilment of objectives of the National Policy on Electronic Communications, an important goal is maintenance and targeted development of the scientific, research and information background in the SR, able to actively participate in the integration trends related to the incoming information society, as well as orientation of projects of international co-operation to information society services.**

### **3.8 International Co-operation**

The relations with the EU and co-operation with international governmental organisations ITU, OECD, WTO, WIPO, EUTELSAT, IMSO, as well as with the non-governmental organisations CEPT and ETSI, will play an important role in the next period.

It is related not only with enforcement of the foreign policy interests, but also with enforcement of economic interests of Slovakia. In this context, the area of electronic communications comes to the head as the phenomenon of the new millennium. Therefore, a special attention should be paid to the active representation and action of the Slovak Republic

not only in the area of bilateral co-operation but also in international organisations dealing with issues of electronic communications.

**The objective of the international co-operation in the area of electronic communications is an active communication with international governmental and non-governmental organisations, with emphasis on permanent and consistent monitoring of its activities and with the application of new legislation and technical regulations.**

#### **4. Conclusion**

The most important long-term strategic objective of the National Policy on Electronic Communications is to support the Slovak electronic communications market to allow its gradual development in compliance with needs of our full integration to the European and Trans-Atlantic structures, both from the point of view of the range of provided services of required quality and availability for Slovak citizens. An important task will be also to support the regular monitoring and the comparison of the reached level of competition, as well as to develop international relations in the area of electronic communications.

**From the short-term perspective (years 2003 to 2005) for further development of the electronic communications market it is necessary to solve particularly the following tasks:**

- 1. Priority task – to submit to the Slovak Government the Bill on Electronic Communications** so that it could be approved by the National Council of the SR before the SR admission to the EU and could enter into force on 1 January 2004, but not later than upon the SR accession to the EU.

Deadline: by 30 September 2003

Responsible: MDPT SR

- 2.** In the area of strengthening the independence of the NRA - to separate financing of the regulatory body so that it will be financed independently from the Ministry of Transport, Posts and Telecommunications of the SR.

Deadline: by 30 September 2003

Responsible: MF SR, MDPT SR, TU SR

- 3.** To ensure the transfer of execution of shareholder's rights of the MDPT SR in ST, a.s. to another central body of the state administration (e. g. Ministry of Finance of the SR (MF SR)) or to another state administration body so as to maintain the influence of the State and simultaneously achieve fully independent position of the creator of the National Policy on Electronic Communications from entities regulated on electronic communications markets in the SR.

Deadline: not later than on the day of the SR accession to the EU

Responsible: MDPT SR, MF SR

- 4.** In the area of National Crisis Management to ensure the implementation of the Tampere Convention on the Provision of Telecommunication Resources for Disaster Mitigation and Relief Operations.

Deadline: not later than on the day of the accession of the SR to the EU

Responsible: MDPT SR, Ministry of Interior of the SR (MV SR), MO SR

5. In the area of terrestrial digital TV broadcasting:
  - a) To create conditions for implementation of the pilot DVB-T projects in Bratislava, Banská Bystrica or Košice and starting the trial broadcasting.  
Deadline: by 30 June 2004  
Responsible: MDPT SR, MO SR, MV SR, RVR (Council for Broadcasting and Retransmission)
  - b) To create conditions for starting regular DVB-T broadcasting.  
Deadline: Year 2005  
Responsible: MDPT SR, MO SR, MV SR, RVR
6. In the area of frequency spectrum use in co-operation with the competent state administration bodies and NRA to achieve the release of required frequency bands for electronic communications services.  
Deadline: before the end of year 2005  
Responsible: MO SR, MV SR, MDPT SR, TU SR, RVR
7. In the area of satellite TV and radio broadcasting to ensure the optimal use of assigned channels for needs of the SR.  
Deadline: before the end of year 2005  
Responsible: MDPT SR, RVR, TU SR
8. To continuously evaluate the fulfilment of the National Policy on Electronic Communications.  
Deadline: by 1 April 2004 (for the whole year 2003)  
Responsible: MDPT SR, TU SR

**For the medium-term and long-term perspectives (after the year 2005) the following tasks should be particularly solved to ensure further development of the electronic communications market :**

1. In the area of harmonisation of frequency tables to harmonise the National Table of Frequency Spectrum with the European Table of Frequency Spectrum not later than by 2008.
2. To support the introduction of terrestrial digital radio broadcasting in T-DAB system, in compliance with the revised Wiesbaden Arrangement and the Maastricht Arrangement. It is recommended to implement the pilot T-DAB project before the end of year 2006.
3. In the area of terrestrial digital TV broadcasting to complete the change from analogue to digital TV broadcasting by 2015.