



ecta RESPONSE

**TO THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION BY THE
RADIO SPECTRUM POLICY GROUP
ON**

**DRAFT RSPG OPINION
ON**

**THE EU-LEVEL POLICY APPROACH TO SATELLITE DIRECT-
TO-DEVICE CONNECTIVITY AND RELATED SINGLE MARKET
ISSUES**

RSPG25-008 FINAL

28 MARCH 2025

Introduction

1. **ecta**, the **European competitive telecommunications association**,¹ welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Radio Spectrum Policy Group (hereafter 'RSPG') consultation on its Draft Opinion entitled: *"the EU-level policy approach to satellite Direct-to-Device connectivity and related Single Market issues"* – RSPG25-008 FINAL (hereinafter "draft Opinion").
2. **ecta** represents those alternative operators who, relying on the pro-competitive EU legal framework that has created a free market for electronic communications, have helped overcome national monopolies to give EU citizens, businesses and public administrations quality and choice at affordable prices. **ecta** represents at large those operators who are driving the development of an accessible Gigabit society, who represent significant investments in fixed, mobile and fixed wireless access networks that qualify as Very High Capacity Networks and who demonstrate unique innovation capabilities. **ecta** counts Mobile Network Operators (hereafter 'MNOs'), Fixed Wireless Access operators (hereafter 'FWA operators'), Fixed Network Operators (hereinafter "FNE Operators") as well as Mobile Virtual Network Operators (hereafter 'MVNOs') among its members.

ecta members are actively: (i) investing significant amounts of resources for contributing to EU digital compass connectivity targets through deployment of sustainable electronic communications networks and services (fixed, mobile, FWA, (B2C, B2B, B2B2C, IoT)), and (ii): acting as challengers in an environment characterized by intense 5G deployment.

3. **ecta** in following section provides its key messages relating to the draft Opinion, covering both the considerations included therein and considerations that are not covered, but are considered highly relevant by **ecta**.

Key ecta messages

4. **ecta's** key messages in response to RSPG25-008 FINAL are the following.
5. **Scene setting and structured overview.** **ecta** welcomes the draft RSPG Opinion, which gives a detailed overview on Satellite Direct-to-Device connectivity issues, referring to four distinct types of direct to device satellite services, and presents a structured opinion proposal for each of the four. **ecta** appreciates this structured approach.
6. **Recommendations on harmonized technical conditions.** **ecta** appreciates that the draft Opinion provides recommendations on the harmonised technical

¹ <https://www.ectaportal.com/about-ecta>

conditions for D2D-IMT satellite operations in ECS harmonised bands, addressing, as appropriate, protection of ECS networks and other radio services from D2D satellite operations. It also provides useful recommendations for D2D IoT services in SRD bands. In such context, [ecta](#) highlights that all voluntary sharing initiatives between mobile and satellite operators are welcome. [ecta](#) firmly believes that the technical harmonisation of those bands will facilitate those agreements, and that technical harmonisation together with the promotion of voluntary sharing agreements, represents the best solution to minimize or prevent interference issues that have significant impact on consumers and businesses.

7. [ecta](#) wishes to underline that inter-country interference is an extremely relevant issue for the D2D-IMT scenario, and it is likely to be an even greater problem for the direct to device satellite connectivity services vis à vis the terrestrial wireless connectivity services. The former, by nature of the service, implies LEO satellites moving over the different countries, be they in the European Union or external to the Union. It is therefore of utmost importance that inter-country issues are managed via proper technical solutions in coordination with the international bodies, taking the appropriate time and by taking into utmost account the position, timing and business sensitivities of the involved private stakeholders. Any solution that privileges quick implementation over a future proof solution would end up creating irreversible problems for the operators and for users.

8. [ecta](#) further considers that the RSPG proposal for national level geographical sharing, where a D2D-IMT service could be provided without the consent of the Mobile Network Operator, which is the terrestrial spectrum license holder, is not viable and should be removed from the list of possible options for the introduction of D2D services. Such national geographical sharing proposal fails to adequately consider the extensive terrestrial mobile coverage in Europe and the generally limited size of white spots, which would make it challenging for a satellite operator to provide services while ensuring the protection of co-channel terrestrial networks in neighbouring areas.

9. **Equal treatment between the terrestrial and non-terrestrial connectivity networks and services providers.** [ecta](#) notes that the draft Opinion does not include any policy position, even at a general principle level, on the issues regarding: security (including lawful intercept, sovereignty, national security, privacy “know your customer” requirements - SIM card registration), consumer protection measures, cybersecurity, resilience, emergency communications and in general compliance with the licence conditions and regulatory obligations for D2D satellite service providers including any applicable contributions in the form of licenses fees, deriving from using the IMT spectrum. The RSPG in fact states, only for the security issues *“The RSPG underlines that Member States manage lawful intercept and*

national security issues on a sovereign national basis". ecta highlights that satellite direct-to-device services, where used similarly to IMT services, should meet exactly the same security, cybersecurity, resilience and compliance standards (including emergency communications) as terrestrial networks. This is necessary, in order to ensure that consumers and business do not suffer. ecta therefore kindly invites RSPG to affirm in the final text of the Opinion a principle of equal treatment, in application of which all types of satellite (D2D and broadband) services which are of same type as ECS services based on the use of terrestrial spectrum must be subject to the same rules, for all issues, including security, cybersecurity, resilience and compliance.

10. **Competition at the core of the regulation regarding the direct to device satellite services.** ecta also notes that this draft Opinion, while mentioning competition as one of the main issues, does not provide any other hint on how the RSPG, and in general Institutions, intend to deal with the risk that competition is distorted by the entrance of very powerful players such as Starlink and Amazon Kuiper into the electronic communications services provision markets. Policy makers should aim to ensure fair competition in the electronic communications services provision markets and to make sure that undertakings do not distort competition by extending their dominance to European market. In this context, it should be noted that the worldwide direct to device satellite communications market is very concentrated and that some companies are heavily financed by governments for the launch of their satellites and for the building of the satellite itself. They are able to reach strong network effects that cannot be reached by the terrestrial electronic communications providers. Therefore, ecta kindly invites the RSPG to include in its final Opinion a precise description of the competition issues mentioned in the overview part, which are not dealt with in the opinion part, and to clarify which are the actions that the RSPG intends to take or recommends. This should cover the definition of the harmonisation rules, licensing, authorization, etc. to make sure that competition is not distorted by the entrance of hyperscalers into the European D2D and broadband connectivity markets and to promote fair access to D2D services.

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In case of questions or requests for clarification regarding this contribution, the Radio Spectrum Policy Group is welcome to contact Mr Luc Hindryckx, ecta Director General, or Ms Pinar Serdengecti, ecta Regulation and Competition Affairs Director.