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Connectivity
Radio Spectrum Policy Group
RSPG Secretariat

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RADIO SPECTRUM POLICY GROUP

Progress Report of the RSPG Sub Group on Strategy on the future use of the frequency band 470-694 MHz beyond 2030 in the EU

1. The **RSPG** Working Group on “Strategy on the future use of the frequency band 470-694 MHz beyond 2030 in the EU” (hereafter: the **UHF SG**) continued to work on its assigned tasks, holding three more meetings since RSPG plenary (7 June):
 - Meeting #3 on 27 June, virtual;
 - Meeting #4 on 23 September, virtual;
 - Meeting #5 on 25 and 26 October, hybrid (hosted by BNetzA).
2. The participants registered in the group represent the following Administrations: Austria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, plus the representative of the European Commission.
3. The **UHF SG** asked the Administrations, on a voluntary basis, to share their responses to the questionnaire submitted from LS Telecom, in the context of the study about the use of the UHF band awarded by the European Commission. To date, 13 Administrations have shared their responses. The questionnaire will not be the subject of analysis but will form part of a common knowledge base.
4. The Meeting #3 was dedicated to a brainstorming exercise. The focal issue was defined with this question: “How will the future of the audio-visual content be shaped, in terms of consumption / production / distribution?” A couple of techniques taken from the field of Strategic Foresight were applied. Before the meeting a so-called STEEP analysis was performed to find the driving forces, while during the meeting the 2x2 Matrix Technique was applied.
5. It has to be noted that the participants had no specific expertise in strategic foresight techniques. Further, the resulting scenarios do not represent the positions or wishes of any Administration, but were developed by the participants who offered their valuable opinion, as EU citizens, being familiar with the issues under discussion.
6. Nevertheless, the co-chairs elaborated on the results and proposed some key findings, i.e. some recurring themes that can be usefully considered, when shaping the possible technically feasible scenarios, requested by the relevant working item of the RSPG programme.
7. With respect to the three main points to be adequately addressed in the Opinion, according to the Work Programme, the status is as follows.
 - a. First point: *a review of the background and recommendations of the 2015 RSPG opinion*. The revision can be considered almost complete. It covers both the part of the European regulatory framework in its current state, and a review of the status and completion of the points contained in the previous RSPG Opinion of 2015.
 - b. Second point: *discuss how the flexibility set out in Article 4 of EU Decision 2017/899 could be implemented in practice*. The **UHF SG** discussed and enumerated the main

points of Article 4 regarding flexibility and identified an initial set of existing technical solutions that allow for a certain level of flexibility, each in a different way and with their own opportunities and limitations. In particular, the following have currently been identified, and will be further explored: GE06 – Envelope concept; Dedicated band (example: 600 MHz band plan); SDL implementation; 5G Broadcasting. Each of these will be further explored in future meetings. In addition, the status of implementation and the evaluation of the application of Article 4 will be analysed.

- c. Third point: *develop/describe possible technically feasible scenarios concerning development of use in UHF band*. The **UHF SG** discussed the topic and concluded on the need to distinguish between scenario drivers and actual technically feasible scenarios. On the first point, the discussion resulted in a preliminary collection of meaningful drivers, captured in a mind map and that will be elaborated in the next meetings. On the second point, possible techniques were identified (such as: Dynamic spectrum Access (white spaces), Spectrum sharing, SDL, 5G/6G Broadcast) for which further elaboration is needed.
8. The work plan for the coming months includes four meetings, with dates already set (two in December and two in January 2023). The aim is to reach an agreed final text of the Draft Opinion, in time for submission to RSPG Plenary #60, scheduled for 15/2/2023, in order to meet the deadline of February 2023 set in the calendar.
 9. No material is submitted to the Plenary for approval at this stage.

RSPG work item: update to Plenary	
Work item	Strategy on the future use of the frequency band 470-694 MHz beyond 2030 in the EU
Rapporteur/s	Elena Nanou, Hellenic Telecommunications and Post Commission, Greece Umberto Mascia, Ministry of Economic Development, Italy
Rationale	<p>In 2015, the RSPG published its Opinion on a “long-term strategy on the future use of the UHF band (470-790 MHz) in the European Union”. In addition to recommendations regarding the availability of the 700 MHz band for mobile, the RSPG also expressed its vision about the long term use of the band 470-694 MHz, in particular in its recommends 7, 8, 9 and 11.</p> <p>In 2017, this RPSG Opinion and the Lamy report recommended the main elements of the compromise which was the basis of the EU Decision 2017/899 on “the use of the 470-790 MHz frequency band in the Union”. This Council and European Parliament Decision is providing legal certainty until 2030 to terrestrial broadcasting and PMSE in the frequency band 470-694 MHz.</p> <p>Article 4 of EU Decision 2017/899 establishes that Member States shall ensure availability at least until 2030 of the 470-694 MHz (‘sub-700 MHz’) frequency band for the terrestrial provision of broadcasting services, including free television, and for use by wireless audio PMSE on the basis of national needs, while taking into account the principle of technological neutrality. Member States shall ensure that any other use of the sub-700 MHz frequency band on their territory is compatible with the national broadcasting needs in the relevant Member State and does not cause harmful interference to, or claim protection from, the terrestrial provision of broadcasting services in a neighbouring Member State. Such use shall be without prejudice to obligations resulting from international agreements, such as cross-border frequency-coordination agreements. By mid 2021, the European commission launched a one year study “to examine latest developments and trends that are relevant for the current and future use of the 470-694 MHz band”, in response to Article 7 of this decision.</p> <p>As an element of context, WRC-23, on the basis of the review of the spectrum use and spectrum needs of existing services in the frequency band 470-960 MHz, will consider possible regulatory actions in the 470-694 MHz band in Region 1 based on the results of the studies foreseen in Resolution 235 (WRC-15). It has to be noted that, regardless of any decision made at WRC-23, it does not impact EU Decision 2017/899 and does not create any obligation on the EU after 2030 to change the current harmonised use in the band 470-694 MHz.</p> <p>Therefore, in order to support the European Commission to respond to Article 7 of the EU decision 2017/899, there is a need for the RSPG to contribute, from an EU perspective, with a strategic vision for sub-700 MHz spectrum use, including an analysis of latest developments with a review of the background and recommendations of the 2015 RSPG Opinion, and the consideration of possible post-2030 scenarios, taking into account what is established in Article 4 of the EU Decision 2017/899.</p>

Scope	<p>Building on the 2015 RSPG opinion, RSPG will investigate the latest development, as underlined in Article 7 of the EU decision 2017/899, relating to the band 470-694 MHz and develop a strategic vision for sub-700 MHz spectrum use beyond 2030. This includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review of the background and recommendations of its first opinion. • Discuss how the flexibility set out in Article 4 could be implemented in practice. • Develop/Describe possible technically feasible scenarios concerning development of use in this frequency band with relevant key assumptions and conditions, including potential consequences in terms of EU harmonisation framework in this band, in particular for post-2030, and taking into account the links with content regulation. <p>This activity will not address WRC-23 agenda item 1.5 which remains to be addressed solely under the activity regarding the preparation of EU position for WRC-23.</p> <p>This activity will be the first step for RSPG to support the European Commission in its response to Article 7 of the Decision. The priority of RSPG will be to address bullet 2 above. RSPG intends to develop subsequent opinions if necessary, in a timely manner.</p>
Planned deliverables and timing	<p>RSPG Opinion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Opinion for public consultation: February 2023 • Final Opinion: June 2023
Analytical approach	<p>Sharing a common knowledge base and discussions with an open mindset, in a think-tank style, in order to envisage societal and technical developments in the distant future (10 years and beyond).</p> <p>Use of the principles and some techniques of Strategic Foresight.</p>
Project plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 1 – "diverge" phase, creating choices to hypothesise more possible futures. • Phase 2 – "converge" phase, describe appropriate choices compatible with the various hypothesised futures.
Dependencies	<p>No dependencies identified at present.</p>