

Telecom Italia response to

RSPG DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME 2012

(08 February 2012)

Introduction

Telecom Italia welcomes the Radio Spectrum Policy Group invitation to express comments and views in relation to the draft RSPG 2012 Work Programme.

We generally agree with the list of topics proposed as draft work program, and we endorse limiting the number of working areas, as desired by RSPG. This could help focusing in:

- 1) spectrum allocation matters which have greater relevance for the market dynamics;
- 2) the rapid development of new technologies that should be considered more attractive from an economic and commercial point of view.

In our view it is very important that not only Member States and the European Commission, but also the whole industry acquire a common reference on the objectives and the main themes to be treated at different levels, taking into account European positions and priorities.

In this context, a central role should be given to RSPG Opinions and Reports.

As the RSPG Work Programme is of outmost relevance and it may have a significant impact on the markets, we maintain the importance of the opportunity given to all stakeholders to comment on all the draft RSPG Opinions, Reports or Position papers, within a reasonable period of time, to improve the transparency and publicity of the activities.

Telecom Italia has always supported the Commission initiative to develop a multiannual Radio Spectrum Policy Programme (RSPP), and we therefore underline the importance of a close coordination between the radio spectrum policy and the implementation of the Digital Agenda for Europe, with a strengthened role of the RSPG.

In particular:

Future Spectrum for wireless broadband

Telecom Italia agrees on the importance of analysing the demand and the technological trends to determine the current and future need of spectrum and on the requirement of defining suitable policies to provide sufficient resources in order to match the demand and to deliver the greatest collective and economical benefits.

Telecom Italia has explained its view regarding the review of spectrum use in its response to draft RSPG Opinion on Review of Spectrum Use (RSPG11-391 Rev.1)

The analysis should take into account not only the current spectrum demand, but also the possible future one for the next 10-15 years, since the reallocation process generally requires a long time period.

A long-term strategy should take into account that the frequency bands should be reserved to applications which can efficiently use the spectrum resource and can be beneficial to society. In particular one should prefer those applications which can really bring economic and social benefits.

In this respect, Telecom Italia deems that the priority should be given to identifying the spectrum demand necessary to deploy the mobile broadband services.

Preparation of the next World Radio Conference (WRC)

Telecom Italia completely agrees with the necessity to individuate as early as possible the common policy objectives on items included in WRC-15 agenda of particular interest for the EU policies.

Many several issues are addressing spectrum policies which are of interest of EU, and we maintain the importance of coordination at EU level on the agenda item foreseen for the next WRC-15, aimed to assess the future demand for wireless broadband services.

Telecom Italia also points out that this activity should be a common policy objective reference not only for Member States and the European Commission, but also for the whole European industry.

Increasing opportunities for shared use of spectrum

Telecom Italia is of the opinion that the shared use of a spectrum band should only be applied if there is sufficient certainty that the likely benefits will outweigh the risk of unmanageable harmful interferences with the primary service and to other bands, considering also regulatory requirements for mobile services, regarding services availability, quality, and reliability and so on.

Given that investment and planned technology are based on the ability to use spectrum in a certain manner, frequency owners need certainty that no interference will change the spectrum value itself and will not jeopardise infrastructure investments based on certain assumptions for spectrum use.

As a consequence, Telecom Italia is favourable to solutions in an intra-operator scenario that could allow more flexible and efficient use of the spectrum resources assigned to and managed by a single operator.

Addressing situations resulting in underutilisation of spectrum

Current allocations of spectrum may meet the increased demand for wireless broadband services and applications only for the medium term, and it is of the outmost importance to promptly identify frequency bands which are not efficiently used and which can be reallocated to ECS to meet the increased demand of mobile broadband.

Consequently, we think that RSPG may play a fundamental role in directing European policies, in monitoring the ratio between the growth of the service demand and the actual availability of frequency resources, and also in preventing spectrum scarcity from implying any restriction for customers on access to content, sites and platforms.

Telecom Italia believes that the spectrum needs should be primarily obtained through the unused or severely underused frequency bands and it should take into account the time to market requirements of the emerging services which need new frequency allocations.

Possible spectrum reallocation is a complex and likely expensive issue but, as spectrum is a national asset, governments should seek to find its optimum allocation.

This would imply:

- the development of procedures at EU level to constantly monitor the spectrum use, at least in the more interesting bands for mobile broadband. If the procedures identify frequency bands that are allocated to services that are not fully exploited or severely underused, actions should be taken at European level to quickly reallocate these bands to ECS which can grant the maximum benefits for consumers and society;
- an assessment of the economic results at EU level, stemming from the allocation of frequencies to other technologies/applications, in order to be sure that spectrum resources be efficiently exploited. When a technology/application is found not to fulfil market expectations, the spectrum should be reallocated to more profitable services, provided that technology and service neutrality principles, social interest and protection of services in the same and in adjacent bands are maintained.

In our opinion, the areas where spectrum use optimization should be deployed are the military, aeronautical radar, satellite services, broadcasting and public safety sectors. In this respect, the frequency range from 300 MHz to 3 GHz might be analysed in order to identify unused assignments and/or not efficient use of spectrum.

Cooperation BEREC-RSPG

Telecom Italia welcomes any initiative coming from RSPG and BEREC to facilitate the development of a harmonised, coordinated policy regarding spectrum management.

We hope that RSPG will continue monitoring, in particular, the transition to the spectrum regime defined in the new regulatory framework, focusing for example on service and technology neutrality and on flexible spectrum management.

It could provide guidelines for new spectrum management principles application, including spectrum trading, that should be introduced in the market in way of facilitating undertakings to operate an electronic communication network so as to improve their commercial performances.

Intra-EU cross-border spectrum coordination

Telecom Italia completely agrees with the necessity to strengthen the coordination in bilateral negotiations between EU member states.

Clearly, in order to achieve the abovementioned goals, a constant assessment of common policy objectives and priorities would be of primary importance.

Notwithstanding, TI deems that the RSPG should not be an arbiter which can enforce obligations on the parties, and that the RSPG intervention should be called for only if both the concerned parties agree on this.

Other issues

Telecom Italia confirms its interest in participating in any other activity related to the spectrum policies promoted by RSPG as, for example, the issues proposed in the draft work program regarding the efficient interference management and strategic sectorial spectrum needs.