5G Media Action Group (5G-MAG)

Response to RSPG RSPP Consultation

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Submitted by

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About 5G-MAG

The 5G Media Action Group (5G-MAG) is a cross industry association gathering the stakeholders across the media sector including content and service providers, network operators, technology solution suppliers, equipment manufacturers, R&D organizations, regulators and policy makers. 5G-MAG is open to participants from other sectors, such as transport and PPDR, that may have common needs as the media sector, as well as to any organization that supports its objectives and is willing to contribute to their fulfilment.

5G-MAG provides a framework for stakeholders to collaborate on a market-driven implementation of 5G solutions capable of meeting the requirements for the production and distribution of audio-visual media content and services.

General Comments

5G-MAG welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Radio Spectrum Policy Group's (RSPG) draft Radio Spectrum Policy Programme (RSPP). We would like to take this opportunity to support the ambition of both the RSPG and the European Commission to set out a clear strategic policy framework for spectrum usage across Europe.

We note that the request from the Commission (RSPG 20-003) requires that this policy programme should apply until 2030. This represents a critical period for the media industry both within Europe, and also world-wide (which due to its wide membership is of great interest to the 5G-MAG membership).

We fully support the need for the RSPP to support key Union objectives such as the European Gigabit Society and the shaping of Europe's digital future. However, we also note the need to ensure that important public services continue to retain access to the spectrum that is essential to allow them to continue to produce and deliver public service media services to all European citizens.

A large number of studies have shown that the carriage of media services consumes the largest proportion of mobile service capacity across the world. This trend is likely to continue through the launch and development of 5G networks and their potential to launch new services. As these digital ecosystems evolve, the need arises for the spectrum policy, technology development, network

deployment and related regulations to take into account the requirements from the media industry both in the distribution and production domains to meet the expectations of users.

Specific 5G-MAG comments

2. STRATEGIC SPECTRUM ISSUES

2.1. Spectrum Sharing

"European Commission and Members States should […] actively promote innovative spectrum sharing solutions to ensure greater spectrum efficiency, to enhance flexibility in spectrum access by following the "use-it-or-share-it" principle, and to support the development of spectrum pooling, while highlighting the need to consider the competition aspects in assessing any specific case at hand, multi-tiered spectrum access approaches, including those assisted by geolocation databases or other ICT-based solutions." (page 3)

5G-MAG agrees that spectrum sharing is an important way to maximise the efficient use of spectrum and to encourage spectrum users to cooperate in making the best use of this scarce resource. However, in addition to identifying suitable bands for spectrum sharing it is also necessary to ensure that the licensing regime adopted by administrations supports a consistent way of managing and allocating spectrum sharing across the Union.

A positive example of spectrum sharing is the UHF band (470-694 MHz) where across Europe and in other regions around the world Digital Terrestrial Television ('DTT') users successfully share their use of the UHF band with audio wireless PMSE (production services used for programme-making such as wireless microphones and talkback systems) and white space device applications. The establishment of such a common usage area has encouraged manufacturers to produce cost effective PMSE equipment supporting the production sector. This example shows how different services can share the same spectrum on an interference-free basis and therefore maximise the efficient use of the spectrum.

On the other hand, we note that effective spectrum sharing is only possible where all uses of a band are understood and effective protection mechanisms are in place. For example, it would not be possible to introduce sharing in the 3.8-4.2 GHz band unless protection of incumbent uses such as satellite downlink and point-to-point links is recognized. Therefore, before opening up new bands for sharing, effective protection mechanisms for incumbent users must be ensured.

5G-MAG welcomes the initiative from the RSPG to explore innovative sharing solutions to make a more efficient use of the spectrum as long as the priority and QoS requirements of the content production sector can be ensured at all times.

2.2. Licensing and Spectrum Awards

"Local networks could be provided by mobile operators, third-parties or directly by the local users themselves. The response to demand for local spectrum can be met through spectrum leasing (voluntary/mandatory), by dedicated spectrum allocations for local networks and/or by third party operated local networks." (page 3)

The broadcasting, education and media production industries have a long track record of deploying and operating their own wireless networks for content production which can be local and permanent, but also temporary (i.e. from a few hours to several days) and/or nomadic (i.e. for touring performances). It is important to ensure timely and flexible access to adequate spectrum for

such applications in the future, including for the provision of private networks based on new wireless technologies such as 5G.

While 5G MAG recognises that the solutions for local licences depend on the national situation and on spectrum availability, it would nonetheless be beneficial for the users if licensing regimes and spectrum ranges were harmonised across the EU, including for cross-border operations. This could, for example, encourage the use of harmonised tuning ranges across the EU for PMSE applications and, in the future for non-public local 5G networks, could be very helpful for content production companies.

3. SPECTRUM NEEDS AND SUPPORTING EU VISION / POLICIES

"In order to respond to European policy initiatives such as the Green Deal, Gigabit Society, Shaping Europe's digital future (5G and beyond, 6G, resilient & secure communications), transport communications, Audio-visual Media, Member States shall, in cooperation with the Commission, aim at ensuring there is sufficient spectrum available for those policy areas based on spectrum needs." (page 5)

5G MAG is encouraged by the RSPG support of audio-visual media amongst other key areas, and sets out that Member States and the European Commission should ensure that "there is sufficient spectrum available for those policy areas based on spectrum needs. It is important that this support is reflected in wider spectrum policy adopted by the RSPG and the EU.

"The RSPG considered a policy target of making available at least 12 GHz of spectrum below 100 GHz (including already EU-harmonised spectrum) to promote innovative wireless services, including next generation mobile and wireless access systems (such as Wi-Fi). With initiatives well underway, there is in fact already more than 12 GHz of harmonised spectrum available for wireless services and no need to define any quantitative target in RSPP to respond to EU policies:
- RSPG confirms the need for inclusion of policy objectives supporting the development of innovative wireless services based on generic description rather than quantitative.
- In addition, as has been done recently for 5G, the RSPG can develop long-term spectrum availability plans including needs for harmonisation initiatives for key EU policy areas upon request." (page 5)

It is helpful to note that the RSPG considers that the 12GHz spectrum target for the promotion of innovative services is already likely to be met within the existing spectrum policy framework. 5G-MAG therefore supports its objective of ensuring that all of the spectrum already identified for these services is made available to the market in a consistent manner across all Members States.

3.4. Broadcasting and PMSE

"RSPG is of the view that the future of broadcasting and PMSE in regard of the UHF Band 470-694 MHz shall not be subject of a new RSPP […]. The UHF 470-960 MHz band is on the agenda for the upcoming WRC23 conference and RSPG intends to provide a recommendation to the EC on an EU position accordingly in its opinion towards WRC23. The current Council and European Parliament Decision is providing legal certainty until 2030 to terrestrial broadcasting including conditioned national flexibility." (page 7)

5G-MAG recognizes that the current Council and European Parliament Decision is already setting the EU policy in regard to the TV-UHF band for broadcasting and PMSE. The current EU policy provides legal certainty until at least 2030. Therefore, 5G-MAG welcomes the RSPG view that the UHF band

shall not be the subject of a new RSPP and that it intends to provide such a recommendation to the EC on its policy towards WRC23.

The sub-700MHz UHF band is used extensively across Europe by broadcasters for the delivery of digital television services. In a substantial number of European countries, the UHF band represents the main means of providing access to public service television services to European citizens. As is noted above the sub-700MHz band is used extensively across Europe for audio PMSE equipment, capacity which Is vital to continued success of the TV, film, music and theatre industries.

In addition, terrestrial broadcast will remain an important distribution technology. New services based upon the use of "5G Broadcast" Standalone Downlink Only (SDO) standards will ensure the continuation of important low-threshold access to media content via mobile devices. 5G Broadcast, as a complement to DTT, using dedicated networks and spectrum, is therefore a promising way forward.

When it comes to spectrum used by broadcasting organisations and PMSEs, namely the sub-700 MHz band, its use is set at Article 4 of the EU UHF Decision, which foresees[1] stability "**at least** until 2030".

To this end 5G-MAG notes that the RSPG intends to provide a recommendation to the EC on an EU position in its opinion towards WRC23. The view of 5G-MAG is that the sub-700 MHz band will remain important for media distribution and that there should be "no-change" of the allocation to the Broadcasting Service at WRC-23. Furthermore, is should be noted that flexibility for use of the sub-700 MHz spectrum is already provided by the GE-06 agreement.

6.6. Audio-visual Media Policy

"- The RSPG recommends/recalls that any initiatives to be taken on an EU-level encompass all the different dimensions. The overall objective is to strike a balance to the benefit of consumers/users in all Member States.
- The RSPG supports smooth transition to new technologies and convergence of services.
- The RSPG supports technology/service neutrality to accommodate new innovative applications while ensuring the EU population free access to linear broadcasting content over different platforms." (page 14)

5G-MAG welcomes the RSPG's support for the smooth transition/adoption of new technologies whilst ensuring that the EU population has continued free access to linear broadcasting content. This, as is noted above, is currently delivered through the DTT and satellite networks. It is also important the on-line delivery mechanisms are enhanced to ensure the continuance of free-to-air content that EU citizens have come to expect.

[1] "*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*". https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32017D0899&from=en