

Response from the UK administration to the RSPG consultation on “The Introduction of Multimedia Services in particular in the frequency bands allocated to the broadcasting services”

The UK welcomes the RSPG consultation on the ‘Introduction of Multimedia Services.....’ and endorses the proposals it contains. In particular, we note that a number of key actions are identified in the Opinion and we emphasise the importance of ensuring that these actions are taken forward in a proactive and timely manner.

A key proposal concerns the action to review the Maastricht Special Arrangement in relation to the 1452 – 1479.5 MHz band. As explained in the draft Opinion this Arrangement now seems unduly restrictive as it does not provide a practicable means for use of this band by other technologies and services.

In the UK’s opinion, the most basic limitations of the plan can be overcome relatively easily. 1452 – 1479.5 MHz was identified as being a potential candidate for flexible use in the RSPG Opinion on WAPECS adopted in November 05. Furthermore, a clear principle of flexibility was articulated by all Member States, and many other countries as well, as a declaration to the agreement and all-digital plan made recently at the ITU Regional Radio Conference in VHF and UHF frequency ranges. This principle should be applied explicitly to the Maastricht Agreement as well.

The UK also believes the principle should be extended slightly to create a framework in which systems of wider bandwidth than T-DAB/T-DMB could be established where required. This would be based on an aggregation of individual countries’ rights for T-DAB under the existing MA02 Plan.

Beyond this, a revision of the MA02 Plan itself could yield technical efficiencies relevant to a wider range of systems and technologies, perhaps without significant compromise to the potential to implement T-DAB. However, this would take a significant time to achieve, and the benefits would need to be set against the opportunity cost of delays to the implementation of systems.

We therefore call on the RSPG and the Commission to develop a clear work plan to take this work forward as a priority. We do not believe this work requires a full planning conference and instead consider that Member States and the Commission should work together to identify a pragmatic and timely solution in line with the approaches described above.

Ofcom
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