

## **Radio Spectrum Policy Group Opinion On the Introduction of Multimedia services in particular in the frequency bands allocated to the broadcasting services**

Comments by Mediaset S.p.A.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Mediaset is in general agreement with the RSPG as regards its outline proposals for facilitating the introduction of multimedia services in Europe. We are convinced that this process does not distort, but rather fosters competition in affected markets, that it encourages innovation without dramatically altering the use of the broadcasting spectrum, and that it promotes exchanges between Member States, without however conflicting with EU and national legislation on television content.

The diversity of the broadcasting spectrum that can be used for introducing multimedia services is wide-ranging. That diversity should be monetized by identifying certain basic principles. These can then be given practical application in individual countries, in line with the general objectives highlighted above, but at the same time taking into account the start-up conditions in each member State, as also the geographical and orographical characteristics, the degree to which digital broadcasting has been developed and the extent of digital dividend already achieved.

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### **ASSESSMENT OF SERVICES CURRENTLY AVAILABLE IN ITALY**

So far as Italy in particular is concerned, at present the following services are operative, almost exclusively in the 470-862 MHz band:

- 11 national<sup>1</sup> and more than 500 local analogue networks;
- 6 national DVB-T<sup>2</sup> multiplexes with coverage ranging from 60% to 80% of the population;
- 30 DVB-T content providers, including the 11 analogue networks, two pay per view services offering various kinds of events (Italian and Champions League

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<sup>1</sup> National analogue networks amount to 11: 3 RAI, 3 Mediaset, 3 TIMB, Rete A, Rete Capri. Rete A and one TIMB channel broadcast at night in DVB-T. Moreover, in reference to bands IV-V (470-862 MHz), RAI 1 should be excluded for it is broadcast almost entirely in band III (174-230 MHz); hence, the number of analogue channels in bands IV-V is actually reduced to 10.

<sup>2</sup> National digital networks (DVB-T) amount to 6: 2 Mediaset, 2 RAI, 1 TIMB, Dfree.

football, films, concerts, operas and games), plus a number of local channels which are also broadcast by digital terrestrial means. All of these new digital offerings are enhanced by interactive services ranging from programme guides and weather bulletins to in-depth analyses of news and programming shown by major networks, direct marketing offers, services and announcements by public authorities, full or partial repeats of programmes previously shown on the main channel and ad hoc content;

- 2 DVB-H multiplexes (Mediaset – hosting Telecom - and H3G) with rapidly expanding indoor and outdoor coverage;
- 2 DVB-H service providers (Telecom and H3G) in operation, plus one close to roll-out (Vodafone); around 20 DVB-H content providers, currently still mostly simulcasts of DVB-T but with some ad hoc content.

All players in the nascent digital market operate on the basis of new, specially awarded licences.

As reported above, the digital marketplace in Italy has already been vastly extended and developed. Any further extension is bound to come about mainly as a function of increases in demand and of economic returns on investment.

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## CONCLUSIONS

An increase in the available range of multimedia services may well be achievable in Italy through exploitation of other bands in addition to the present 470-862 MHz band, given the conclusions of the GE-06 limiting availability for individual member States to 8 layers<sup>3</sup> and the large amount of broadcasting capacity which will be absorbed by the probable launch of HD channels.

*Mediaset S.p.A, July 2006*

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<sup>3</sup> Besides 8 layers in band IV-V, Italy maintains two layers (although one ensures only partial coverage) in band III (most countries hold only one layer, as more spectrum in band III has been assigned to T-DAB).