

ABERTIS TELECOM COMMENTS TO THE RSPG OPINION ON “THE INTRODUCTION OF MULTIMEDIA SERVICES IN PARTICULAR IN THE FREQUENCY BANDS ALLOCATED TO THE BROADCASTING SERVICES”

Abertis Telecom, the leader broadcasting network operator in Spain, welcomes the RSPG invitation to the stakeholders to give their views on the opinion it has drawn up on the introduction of multimedia services in particular in the frequency bands allocated to the broadcasting services. The issue dealt with by the RSPG Opinion is effectively of a great importance and interest, both at social and economic levels, in view of the current technological developments which allow, or will allow in a very near future, commercializing enhanced television services, mobile TV, interactive services etc..

Generally speaking, Abertis Telecom subscribes to the RSPG approach, in particular as far as the need for new licences is concerned, in order to allow the use of multimedia services, while limiting the constraints to the minimum required. In the same way, Abertis Telecom agrees on applying the principle of technological or service neutrality, which has been included in the European Commission documents on the review of the EU Regulatory Framework for Electronic Communications Networks and Services. In its reply to the public consultation on WAPECS, Abertis Telecom already expressed its support to a neutral approach towards technologies and services, provided that rules be set up in order to prevent plurality and public interest services from being discriminated or jeopardized in the Member States.

One should recall that Digital Terrestrial Television implementation in Spain still has to be secured and needs sufficient spectrum for it. Broadcasting service, which constitutes a public service in Spain, is developing at three different levels: national, regional and local. In the latter cases, DTT is still in the stage of being introduced. Furthermore, it should be kept in mind that the current Spanish legislation foresees the allocation of more multiplexes for broadcasting purposes after the switch off planned for 2010. The RSPG itself notes in its opinion that, even after 2012, it may be difficult to provide a sufficient number of 8MHz multiplexes on a national basis.

Abertis Telecom wishes therefore to stress the importance of preserving broadcasting and its associated services. Consequently, the application of the principle of technological and service neutrality, when allocating a possible digital dividend after 2012, should be subordinated to the need of giving priority to broadcasting and its associated services.