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RADIO SPECTRUM POLICY GROUP

1st Progress Report of the RSPG Working Group

**on the preparation of a Report on Efficient Awards and use of
spectrum bands harmonised for Electronic Communications Services**

1st Progress Report of the RSPG Working Group on the preparation of a Report on Efficient Awards and use of spectrum bands harmonised for Electronic Communications Services

RSPG, on 27 February 2014, (RSPG14-556(final)) requested a report on Efficient Awards reflecting the intentions expressed by the RSPG "Work Programme 2014 and beyond" to address the issue of efficient awards and use of spectrum bands harmonised for Electronic Communications Services.

More specifically, the requested Report on "Efficient awards and use of spectrum bands harmonised for Electronic Communications Services (ECS)" should:

- Based on the findings of the RSPG WBB Opinion¹ with regard to spectrum supply, assess the suitability of the current and potentially future EU harmonised bands for ECS with a focus on usage rights conditions to meet spectrum requirements of future WBB systems taking into account different geographical characteristics, market situations, and different usage scenarios so that spectrum is well utilized and future speed, capacity and coverage requirements can be met;
- Provide views and best practices on spectrum award approaches and related conditions of use with a view to promote efficient use of spectrum and meet the spectrum requirements of future WBB systems. In particular, best practices should be discussed with regard to:
 - Auction approaches and design (e.g. types, rules);
 - Incentive measures to promote efficient usage of spectrum based on market mechanisms (e.g. leasing, trading, incentive payments), incentives or requirements for meeting technical performance characteristics (e.g. small cells, LTE-A, TDD), and further innovation;
 - Regulatory approaches to spectrum sharing and/or pooling with a view to achieve higher transmission speeds and capacity, e.g. through forming contiguous spectrum blocks or carrier aggregation.
 - Relevant methods to implement technology neutrality and service neutrality in line with the EU telecom rules regarding current EU harmonised bands for ECS (with a deadline of 24 May 2016) including taking appropriate measures which could include withdrawing underutilised spectrum for ECS;
 - Duration and timeline for potential new bands which could be made available for WBB² in the short and medium term including re-authorization of frequency bands already harmonized;

¹ RSPG13-521(rev1) "RSPG Opinion on Strategic Challenges facing Europe in addressing the Growing Spectrum Demand for Wireless Broadband"

² Future WBB bands under considerations at national level such as 1452-1492 MHz, 2.3-2.4GHz and relevant time plans (700 MHz issue considered mid-term and in relation to « long term UHF »)

In developing this Report, the RSPG work should be carried out in coordination as necessary with BEREC, e.g. where support is needed on licensing and competition issues.

In carrying out work to establish this Report, the RSPG should organise interactions with stakeholders in particular with regard to the suitability of harmonised and identified bands for ECS with a focus on usage rights conditions to meet spectrum requirements of future WBB systems. This should include the strategic considerations on spectrum of the R&D community framed in the Public Private Partnership on the 5th Generation of Communication Systems (5G PPP)³ as part of the Union Research Framework Programme Horizon 2020 (H2020).

The report should be the basis for any future need for RSPG to develop recommendations on the subjects in question, if appropriate, depending on the development of ongoing legislative initiatives.

The report should be delivered by June 2015 for public consultation.

³ http://ec.europa.eu/research/press/2013/pdf/ppp/5g_factsheet.pdf

The WG held its first meeting on 13 May 2014 in London at the invitation of the Office of Communications, London.

The meeting was attended by representatives from France, the Netherlands, Austria, Norway, Denmark, Italy, Sweden, Portugal, Ireland, Finland, UK and the European Commission.

The meeting's aim was to discuss a draft skeleton and the development of a Report on Efficient Awards of those bands already harmonised within the EU for Electronic Communications Services, and in particular to agree the draft scope and structure of a report on which the WG could move forward, including the main items that the report would cover in accordance with the RSPG Request.

Report Structure

A draft skeleton of a potential report structure had been circulated prior to the meeting for comment and to focus discussion at the Working Group Meeting. Two contributions from one Member State had been circulated on proposed issues to be addressed taken into account the RSPG WP, proposal on a possible RSPG/BEREC workshop and a draft questionnaire on the implementation of the Technology and Service Neutrality (T&SN).

Discussion at the meeting focused on and emphasised;

- the importance of building on existing work/previous RSPG and RSPG/BEREC Reports and outputs, where valuable input for the discussion of issues on Efficient Awards could be found.
- the need to focus, at a strategic level in the report and the WG on those issues where the RSPG can add most value to the discussion of Efficient Awards and build on previous RSPG work. These included but are not limited to
 - technology and service neutrality;
 - harmonisation / and under-utilised spectrum v sterilisation;
 - assessment of efficiency against Member State award objectives (for example spectrum efficiency, enhancing competition);
 - Linkage of regulatory objectives to the type of award including qualification processes and timing;
 - Role of spectrum trading and leasing;
 - Spectrum sharing and/or pooling;
 - technological evolution of networks (suitability of current and future spectrum bands to meet future needs for mobile broadband);
 - Future demands (5G) and future award processes
- the importance of highlighting and articulating the specific aims of Member States and ensuring that award processes reflect MS individual market circumstances and objectives
- Limitation of the report to harmonised bands only and the bands which could be subjects to future harmonisation measures further to EC mandate to CEPT.

A revised draft structure, reflecting the discussion of the working group is attached.

Additional Issues

The meeting also noted the importance and benefit of a strategic approach to spectrum and consideration of its use in the general context of electronic communication services.

Questionnaire

The idea of a short Questionnaire dedicated to the issue of the implementation of the Technology and Service Neutrality (T&SN) and distributed to WG members to help identify the extent to which the issue needs to be addressed within the main body of the report, was discussed and agreed.

Responses will be collated by Ofcom and, subject to a requirement being demonstrated in the responses received, it may then be considered whether or not to hold a dedicated meeting on the issue. Otherwise the detailed output will be included in the next WG meeting due to be held in September 2014.

Working with BEREC

Also discussed was the issue of co-ordination with BEREC and potential plans for a joint workshop in the autumn. One proposal has been submitted to the group.

As it was apparent in the WG discussion that a number of issues were up for discussion including scope, content and whether the workshop should be open to stakeholders, a small task group has been established to develop ideas for a joint BEREC/ RSPG workshop. Volunteers for the workshop task group are from UK, France, Italy, Sweden and the EC.

Preliminary thoughts on timing were to convene of the workshop in October, subject to agreement at the WG and with RSPG and BEREC. The task force members plan to meet in the sidelines of either the RSPG plenary (June 12th) or RSC (2-3 July) to further discuss ideas.

It was also noted during the course of the meeting that not all BEREC members have a competency for Spectrum.

Next Meeting and Further Work

The WG agreed to hold the next meeting in September 2014.

In the meantime Ofcom will, in addition to collating responses received to the Questionnaire on implementation of Technology and Service Neutrality, commence work to build on the draft structure attached at Annex 1 and circulate to the WG for comments and input prior to September's meeting

The Commission deadline is for a final RSPG Report by November 2015.

Given this deadline we would suggest that a final Draft of the RSPG Report be prepared for publication and consultation by June 2015 in readiness for ratification at RSC November 2015.

Proposal for meeting schedule;

September 2014

November 2014

January 2015

April 2015

Attachments:

Document RSPG14566- Outline of draft Report on Efficient Awards and use of Spectrum bands harmonised for ECS