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RADIO SPECTRUM POLICY GROUP

Progress Report of the RSPG Sub-group on Strategic Spectrum Matters

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The RSPG sub-group on ‘Strategic Spectrum Matters’ established by the European Commission further to the adoption of the RSPG work program is currently engaged in the response to the Request for Opinion on the EU-level policy approach to satellite Direct-to-Device connectivity and related Single Market issues (RSPG24-023).

Members of this sub-group include 91 representatives from 19 Member States, Norway, Montenegro, Türkiye, Ukraine and the European Commission.

The sub-group has met three times remotely and has held one hybrid meeting in Brussels.

At this stage, the sub-group has set the scene, started to consider various spectrum issues related to Direct-to-Device (D2D) satellite services and issues in relation to EU market access for satellite services. Further, the sub-group has launched a questionnaire on these topics.

1. D2D satellite services

The sub-group has identified three distinct types of D2D services and agreed on definitions accordingly. The main purpose of this subdivision of services is to pinpoint potentially different issues and initiatives based on the underlying spectrum access framework.

- D2D-IMT – Services direct to device in bands mostly used for the provision of terrestrial IMT-based services that have been harmonised within the EU for electronic communications services (ECS)¹.
- D2D-MES – Services direct to mobile earth stations (MES) in frequency bands specific to a satellite operator².
- D2D-IoT – Services direct to IoT devices in frequency bands different from ECS harmonised bands and not specific to a satellite operator such as SRD bands and MSS frequency bands <1GHz

The sub-group notes that the WRC27 agenda includes a number of satellite issues such as AI 1.12, 1.13, 1.14. These issues are outside the scope of this workstream. Nevertheless, any need for possible temporary measures prior to the implementation of the results of WRC27 will be considered by the sub-group (for example, potential need for protection of terrestrial use from D2D satellites operating in adjacent band in a neighboring country).

¹ 700, 800, 900 MHz, 1400 MHz, 1800 MHz, 2 GHz, 2.6 GHz, 3.4-3.8 GHz, 26 GHz and 42 GHz

² This includes the 2 GHz MSS frequency band which has been subject to RSPG Opinion RSPG 24-007. Specific issues relating to the 2GHz MSS band will not be considered in this current workstream.

2. Access to EU market

The satellite sector is subject to intensive industry and service competition (including between regions), growth, investment and innovation. There are many examples of non-EU countries constraining access to their national market for satellite networks (“landing rights”). Some of these constraints aim to ensure compliance with certain rules having international dimension. For example, several countries (including USA, Canada, Australia and Indonesia) have national rules relating to the ITU coordination status or to interference situation with respect to national filings, or affecting the ITU priority rules.

The subgroup has initiated a discussion on possible “common requirements” such as *1) compliance with the Radio Regulations, 2) no interference with stations operated in accordance with Radio Regulations and 3) satellite coordination agreements in place between Member States* to cope with similar issues for access to EU market.

The sub-group has also initiated a discussion on possible mechanisms to react collectively. In the case that there is a need for “common requirements” and in the case of non-compliance to such requirements, examples of tools to enforce them as appropriate are *1) the safeguard procedure of the Radio Equipment Directive (RED), 2) the RSPG Good Offices (Art.28.3 of the EECC) and 3) the MSS 2 GHz process (Commission Decision 2011/667/EC).*

3. Questionnaire circulated to EU Member States

The objective of the questionnaire is to gather high level information from Member States in order to further develop the RSPG analysis in developing an Opinion. The questionnaire addresses both *Authorisation of D2D services in EU Member States* and *Access to EU market*. In order to focus the questionnaire on national authorisation issues, questions related to Radio Regulation Article 4.4 have been retained for further discussion at sub-group level when drafting the Opinion.

The work towards an Opinion is on-going and further progress will be done in upcoming meetings. The responses to the questionnaire are important elements in the path ahead. The deadline for replying was November 4. Thanks to the Member States who contributed to this process. Responses are available to Members of the sub-group on the Circa website.

The sub-group intends to finalise the draft Opinion for public consultation on time for the RSPG plenary in February 2025. Meetings plan has been made available to sub-group members.

The RSPG plenary is invited to note the progress of the work and invited to raise any question for clarification if needed.

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