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RADIO SPECTRUM POLICY GROUP

Work Programme for 2020 and beyond

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Work Programme for 2020-2021

This document describes the RSPG Work Programme which was adopted by the 51st RSPG Plenary meeting (5 February 2020).

The RSPG approved its previous Work Programme “2018 and beyond” in January 2018 and the outputs and activities specified in that Work Programme were delivered by the end of 2019. Some of the work areas during 2018-19 will be on-going. In this regard, the new Work Programme defines new terms of reference for their next stage. Other new, strategic work areas are also set out.

The original draft Work Programme was subject to public consultation between 11 October 2019 and 29 November 2019.

In accordance with the provisions of the EECC the Commission submitted a Request for an Opinion on a Radio Spectrum Policy Programme to the Group in preparation for the 51st Plenary meeting.

RSPG has therefore identified the following work items to be developed during the next years:

- Spectrum Sharing – pioneer initiatives and bands
- Additional spectrum needs and guidance on the fast rollout of future wireless broadband networks
- Role of Radio Spectrum Policy to help combat Climate Change
- “Good offices” to assist in bilateral negotiations between Member States
- Peer review and Member States cooperation on authorisations and awards
- WRC
- New Radio Spectrum Policy Programme (RSPP)

Spectrum sharing - pioneer initiatives and bands

Rationale

Today, spectrum sharing is rather static and, due to this static nature, in some cases overly conservative (putting limiting sharing conditions for new spectrum users or even preventing such new uses). One result of the working group on European Spectrum Strategy is that, in particular spectrum sharing needs further action, especially with regard to its potential to achieve more efficient use of radio spectrum, and to give incentives for innovation. Furthermore, the promotion of the shared use of radio spectrum is a key objective contained in the Directive 2018/1972 establishing the European Electronic Communications Code (hereafter referred to as “EECC”, see Articles 45 (2e) and 46 (1)). New technologies create new opportunities for more dynamic and efficient spectrum sharing. However, before such new technologies can be introduced on a wider scale, there is a need to build trust among users as well as Member States. Strategically, it is therefore important to facilitate trials, exchange of experiences and collaboration among the Member States. A proof of concept helps facilitate a change in the mind-set.

Therefore, the means to improve spectrum sharing and to implement innovative sharing solutions should be investigated, especially by promoting trials (sandboxes), pioneer scenarios/bands, new forms of licensing and a strategic focus on take-up of methods using databases and LSA. In addition, the development and market opportunities for methods, including Artificial Intelligence, should be studied with a view to making concrete proposals for coordinated actions at EU level that bring added value to the Member States.

Scope of RSPG activity

Building on previous relevant deliverables from RSPG and taking into account different spectrum sharing options, this activity will investigate more dynamic spectrum sharing options.

The RSPG will develop a roadmap for increased spectrum sharing and identify key pioneer initiatives and bands.

Planned type of deliverable

Strategy stakeholder workshops

RSPG Opinion

Time schedule

Draft Opinion: January 2021

Final Opinion: June 2021

Additional spectrum needs and guidance on the fast rollout of future wireless broadband networks

Rationale

5G is the most important evolution of wireless broadband in the near future. The RSPG has developed three Opinions as its strategic roadmap towards 5G for Europe, in which it has identified 5G pioneer bands and addressed implementation challenges for 5G:

- RSPG Opinion on spectrum related aspects for next-generation wireless systems (5G), 30 November 2016
- RSPG Second Opinion on 5G networks (Strategic Spectrum Road Map Towards 5G for Europe), 30 January 2018
- RSPG Opinion on 5G implementation challenges (RSPG 3rd opinion on 5G), 30 January 2019.

The commercial launch of 5G in Europe has started. Within this work item, the RSPG will further investigate additional spectrum and harmonisation needs (coverage, capacity and innovation) as well as authorisation regimes within the remits of the EECC for successful deployment, taking into account bands identified at WRC-19.

Scope of RSPG activity

Regarding the pivotal role of wireless broadband, the RSPG will consider additional spectrum as well as the necessity to make a certain amount of harmonised spectrum available by 2025/2030.

RSPG will carry on to engage in the sharing of information and experience in support of a successful roll-out of 5G in the EU, including questions related to the measurement of EMF-limits (i.e. transparency and acceptance), and provide targeted guidance on authorisation and implementation issues, if need is identified.

Planned type of deliverable

RSPG Opinion(s) or Report(s) as appropriate.

High-level workshops addressing the entire industry including verticals, could also be envisaged and used to facilitate these deliverables.

Time schedule

Draft Opinion: October 2020

Final Opinion: January 2021

Role of Radio Spectrum Policy to help combat Climate Change

Rationale

Radio spectrum is the basis for electronic communications and broadband, but also key to important areas like climate change. Climate change is one of the predominant topics in European Union policies. In her political guidelines, the new Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has prioritised a 'green deal' stating: "I want Europe to strive for more by becoming the first climate-neutral continent". The climate-neutral target for Europe is 2050. The RSPG shares the opinion that the fight against climate change and its negative consequences is of utmost importance. Therefore, the RSPG establishes a work item to focus on spectrum policy aspects which are closely related to the efforts of ensuring climate-neutrality.

Scope of RSPG activity

Under the Climate Change work item, the RSPG will issue a debate within the Group, as well as with the relevant stakeholders, on how spectrum policy can help to combat climate change. To this end, questions that should be addressed are:

- Identify climate change-related aspects within spectrum management;
- How can spectrum management help to combat climate change?
- What concrete actions should be recommended at EU-Level?

Planned type of deliverable

RSPG reports and/or opinions as seen appropriate

Public Workshops

Time schedule

Report: January 2021

Opinion: October 2021

“Good offices” to assist in bilateral negotiations between Member States

Rationale

The RSPG’s Good Offices function was originally established in 2012 based on opinion RSPG12-409¹ to assist in bilateral spectrum management negotiations between its members. When Member States have difficulties in cross-border coordination or from harmful interference with another member, they may request the RSPG Chairman to put the matter on the agenda of an RSPG meeting. They would report their difficulties during the meeting and ask for RSPG to bring its good offices to bear on the issue. RSPG may decide to respond positively to this request and set up relevant actions. This form of informal coordination will stay in place and has to be kept forward.

In addition, the new formalised “good offices”-procedure according to Article 28 EECC will apply with regard to harmonised radio spectrum.

Scope of RSPG activity

The Good Offices working group will investigate any co-ordination issues brought to its attention, including harmful interference issues, and will develop and propose appropriate solutions.

There are no provisions for “enforcement” outside the scope of Article 28 EECC and the implementation of such solution relies, in this case, on the good will of RSPG members.

For cases within the scope of Article 28 EECC, the RSPG may issue an opinion proposing a coordinated solution (Article 28 (3) EECC). (Where the good offices procedure according to Article 28 (3) has not resolved the problem or dispute, and at the request of any affected Member State, the European Commission may, taking utmost account of any opinion of the RSPG, adopt decisions to resolve cross-border harmful interferences, Article 28 (4) EECC.

The working group will continue to monitor the delivery of the 700 MHz band for terrestrial systems capable of providing wireless broadband electronic communications services and the migration of TV broadcasting below 694 MHz and address the situations where cross-border coordination agreement has not been reached, including with non-EU countries, as well as the issues of transition where timeline for migration is significantly different among neighbouring countries.

The working group may also follow developments on co-ordination solutions implemented by Member States to ensure efficient usage of the spectrum by 5G networks at the border.

¹ RSPG opinion on the process for EU assistance in bilateral negotiations with third countries and between EU countries
<https://circabc.europa.eu/sd/d/0fb28fab-3007-46b4-bdbf-883b02da318c/RSPG12-409%20on%20EU%20assistance%20as%20Adopted.pdf>

Planned type of deliverable

RSPG opinion, where appropriate, in cases covered by article 28 EECC

RSPG report, as appropriate.

Time schedule

Throughout the period of the work programme.

Peer review and Member States cooperation on authorisations and awards

Rationale

This work item was originally established in 2017 to facilitate peer learning between Member States on spectrum awards and authorisation. Therefore, the RSPG hosts a voluntary “Peer Review” platform (EC CIRCABC website) allowing Member States to share documents and experience and to seek advice from their peers during the award design process. In addition, the RSPG holds Peer Review workshops to share experience and expertise on specific (planned or completed) awards.

According to Article 35 EECC, and at the latest from 21 December 2020 on, this informal process will be formalised for draft selection measures that are subject to Article 55 (2) EECC in relation to radio spectrum, which has been harmonised in accordance with Decision No 676/2002/EC in order to enable its use for wireless broadband networks and services. It is normally up to the national authority concerned to decide whether to subject its draft measure to a Peer Review Forum under Art. 35 EECC. The RSPG may also exceptionally take the initiative to convene a Peer Review Forum where it considers that any draft measure would significantly prejudice the ability of the national authority to achieve the objectives set in Articles 3, 45, 46 and 47 EECC.

Scope of RSPG activity

With regard to harmonised spectrum, the RSPG will provide the formalised processes according to Article 35 EECC.

In addition, the exchanges based on the current informal platform and workshops for past and future awards will continue. It is to be noted that this scope of the RSPG work is somewhat larger than anticipated in Article 35 EECC.

Planned type of deliverable

Peer Review Forums according to Article 35 EECC with regard to harmonised spectrum.

At the request of the concerned national authority: as appropriate, reports and opinions on voluntary Peer Review Forums, Article 35 (7), (9).

Annual reports according to Article 35 (8) EECC (published each February, beginning in 2021).

Informal workshops on upcoming and past awards.

Stakeholder workshops on awards, as appropriate.

Time schedule

Throughout the work programme period.

WRC

Rationale

One of the decisions taken at WRC-19 is the draft Agenda for the next WRC. The RSPG should start to prepare recommendations for European Union position(s) on items which are of particular importance for EU policies as early as possible in the preparation process for the next WRC (WRC-23), similar to the processes successfully carried out for past WRCs.

A review of the WRC-19 results should provide a follow-up of the “Council Decision on the position to be taken on behalf of the European Union in the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) World Radiocommunication Conference 2019 (WRC-19)” and assess whether and how the preparation of WRCs could be improved in order to update, if needed, the recommendations provided in RSPG Opinion on “EU coordination at ITU-R Radiocommunication Conferences”².

Scope of RSPG activity

The RSPG plans to:

1. Review and report on the outcome of WRC-19, including the Agenda for the next WRC and identify any issues of relevance for EU spectrum policy;
2. Prepare an Opinion for positions on Agenda Items of WRC-23 with relevance to EU-policies in order to assist the European Commission in formulating proposals for a council decision.
3. Possibly identify actions for the European Commission in order to provide political support to promote European Union position(s) in regular meetings between EC and non-EU countries.

Planned type of deliverable

RSPG Opinion
Report on the outcome of WRC-19

Time schedule

Interim Opinion: January 2021

Draft Final Opinion: June 2022

Final Opinion: October 2022

The working group could propose a revision of the time schedule according to the progress of the work.

² RSPG19-009 ; http://rspg-spectrum.eu/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/RSPG19-009final_RSPG_Opinion_EU-coordination.pdf

Report on the outcome of WRC-19: June 2020

New Radio Spectrum Policy Programme (RSPP)

Rationale

The current Radio Spectrum Policy Programme (RSPP) was established in early 2012 by Decision No 243/2012/EU. It sets out policy orientations and objectives for the strategic planning and harmonization of the use of radio spectrum. It applies to various sectors and Union policies using spectrum, not just electronic communications.

The objectives of the current RSPP had already been largely achieved by the end of 2015. In addition, the current RSPP does not take into account important policy, regulatory and technological developments over the recent years (setting of Union Gigabit connectivity and climate-neutrality objectives and spectrum role in supporting them, revision of radio spectrum rules related to electronic communications, emerging spectrum needs of different sectors and vertical areas and technological innovation, like artificial intelligence).

The Commission intends to submit a legislative proposal to the European Parliament and the Council for the purpose of establishing a new multiannual Radio Spectrum Policy Programme, setting out the policy orientations and objectives for the strategic planning and harmonisation of the use of radio spectrum, taking utmost account of the opinion of the RSPG.

The Commission submitted its Request for an Opinion on a Radio Spectrum Policy Programme to the Group in preparation for the 51st Plenary meeting (RSPG20-003).

Scope of RSPG activity

The RSPG will develop an opinion contributing to a new multiannual RSPP taking into account the latest technological and regulatory developments and Union policy objectives, including the need to support Gigabit connectivity and climate neutrality targets. The new RSPP should apply up to 2030 and cover various sectors and Union policies using spectrum.

To this end and with regard to the Request for an Opinion on an RSPP by the Commission, the RSPG will consider the following topics:

- making available at least 12 GHz of spectrum below 100 GHz to promote innovative wireless services (including WiFi and 5G and beyond);
- concrete coordinated actions to facilitate the take-up of shared spectrum use;
- the positive impact of technological innovation on efficient spectrum use;
- network evolution and spectrum needs of terrestrial broadcasting and PMSE;
- specific SMEs needs for spectrum;
- approaches to improve environmental sustainability in relation to spectrum authorisation, management and use.
- Improve the visibility of measures to ensure coherence between harmonised standards (RED) and spectrum regulatory framework, and
- opportunities for coordination between civilian and military use of spectrum,

The RSPG will, while considering the indicative list of topics proposed by the Commission in its Request for an Opinion, also evaluate whether all of these topics should form part of a future RSPP, whether there are other topics that should be included in an RSPP and whether some topics should be prioritised over others.

Taking into account the outputs from other RSPG activities identified in this RSPG Work Programme, as appropriate, the RSPG will in its opinion at least:

- take stock of the current RSPP provisions and suggest whether and how they could be carried over to the new RSPP;
- suggest the amount of spectrum below 100 GHz (including already EU-harmonised spectrum) and the time span for making it available for innovative wireless services;
- reflect about concrete actions to improve spectrum efficiency by using technological innovations (in particular, artificial intelligence);
- reflect about setting environment sustainability commitments for wireless systems;
- reflect on other Union policies, e.g. space policy, that may need to be addressed in the new RSPP in terms of spectrum needs, innovative developments or more efficient use of spectrum.

Planned type of deliverable

RSPG opinion

Public Stakeholder Workshop with appropriate experts and policy specialists

Time schedule

The opinion will be provided in good time prior to the preparation of a first draft RSPP by the Commission.

Draft Opinion: possibly January 2021

Final Opinion: possibly June 2021