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TECHNOLOGY

Connectivity  
**Radio Spectrum Policy Group**  
**RSPG Secretariat**

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## **RADIO SPECTRUM POLICY GROUP**

### **Progress Report of the RSPG Sub Group on Strategy on the future use of the frequency band 470-694 MHz beyond 2030 in the EU**

1. The RSPG Working Group on “Strategy on the future use of the frequency band 470-694 MHz beyond 2030 in the EU” (hereafter: the **UHF SG**) held two Webex meetings (11<sup>th</sup> April and 23<sup>rd</sup> May) after the last RSPG plenary (9 February), in order to start the work outlined in the Work Programme for 2022 and beyond.
2. The meetings were attended by representatives from a large number of Administrations: Austria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Turkey, Sweden, Spain, and the European Commission.
3. The expected results of the **UHF SG** cover the next decade (beyond 2030). Accordingly, the **UHF SG** decided to adopt a two-stage approach: first a “diverge” phase, in which to work mainly as a think tank, collect ideas as a product of brainstorming and create sustainable choices in the distant future; then a “converge” phase, in which to make choices and finalise the activity with the production of the opinion.
4. The **UHF SG** adopted a preliminary schedule with the third meeting set for 27<sup>th</sup> June next, and two more meetings tentatively scheduled in September and October 2022.
5. Notably, the third meeting will mark the end of the “diverge” phase. It will be less formal and more brainstorming style, with the aim of gathering ideas on the future of UHF with an open mind. To this end, some specific techniques drawn from the field of Strategic Foresight will be explored.
6. The European Commission awarded LS Telcom a study on developments and trends relevant to the use of the UHF band; as part of this study, a number of Administrations already answered a detailed questionnaire. Since the questionnaire contained, among other things, information that was considered useful for the work of the **UHF SG**, the group decided not to prepare a new questionnaire – which would largely constitute a duplication of effort – but to ask the Administrations, on a completely voluntary basis, to share the questionnaire they had filled in. To date, the completed questionnaire has been shared by nine Administrations. It was made clear that the questionnaire will not be the subject of analysis but will form part of a common knowledge base.
7. Also, in order to create a common knowledge base, the group is encouraged to share other sources of information available online.
8. With respect to the three main points to be adequately addressed in the Opinion, according to the Work Programme, the status is as follows.
  - a. First point: *a review of the background and recommendations of the 2015 RSPG opinion*. At the second meeting, Germany presented a contribution document including a first proposal for a point-by-point revision of the previous opinion. The contribution was highly appreciated by the **UHF SG** for its approach and

completeness, and is considered a good starting point to be worked on again at the September and October meetings.

- b. Second point: *discuss how the flexibility set out in Article 4 of EU Decision 2017/899 could be implemented in practice.* At the second meeting, France presented a contribution document, outlining some possible ways of applying flexibility. This contribution was also the subject of an initial discussion and will be taken up appropriately in the “converge” phase.
  - c. Third point: *develop/describe possible technically feasible scenarios concerning development of use in UHF band.* It was suggested that the technologically feasible scenarios, 10 years from now, will not only be the result of technological evolution but also of the changes taking place in society, particularly in the way people will experience multimedia content. With this in mind, the June meeting will attempt to identify the most critical possible trends and variability factors and then re-read possible technical scenarios in the light of these parameters.
9. No material is submitted to the Plenary for approval at this stage.

<b>RSPG work item: update to Plenary</b>	
<b>Work item</b>	Strategy on the future use of the frequency band 470-694 MHz beyond 2030 in the EU
<b>Rapporteur/s</b>	Elena Nanou, Hellenic Telecommunications and Post Commission, Greece Umberto Mascia, Ministry of Economic Development, Italy
<b>Rationale</b>	<p>In 2015, the RSPG published its Opinion on a “long-term strategy on the future use of the UHF band (470-790 MHz) in the European Union”. In addition to recommendations regarding the availability of the 700 MHz band for mobile, the RSPG also expressed its vision about the long term use of the band 470-694 MHz, in particular in its recommends 7, 8, 9 and 11.</p> <p>In 2017, this RPSG Opinion and the Lamy report recommended the main elements of the compromise which was the basis of the EU Decision 2017/899 on “the use of the 470-790 MHz frequency band in the Union”. This Council and European Parliament Decision is providing legal certainty until 2030 to terrestrial broadcasting and PMSE in the frequency band 470-694 MHz.</p> <p>Article 4 of EU Decision 2017/899 establishes that Member States shall ensure availability at least until 2030 of the 470-694 MHz (‘sub-700 MHz’) frequency band for the terrestrial provision of broadcasting services, including free television, and for use by wireless audio PMSE on the basis of national needs, while taking into account the principle of technological neutrality. Member States shall ensure that any other use of the sub-700 MHz frequency band on their territory is compatible with the national broadcasting needs in the relevant Member State and does not cause harmful interference to, or claim protection from, the terrestrial provision of broadcasting services in a neighbouring Member State. Such use shall be without prejudice to obligations resulting from international agreements, such as cross-border frequency-coordination agreements. By mid 2021, the European commission launched a one year study “to examine latest developments and trends that are relevant for the current and future use of the 470-694 MHz band”, in response to Article 7 of this decision.</p> <p>As an element of context, WRC-23, on the basis of the review of the spectrum use and spectrum needs of existing services in the frequency band 470-960 MHz, will consider possible regulatory actions in the 470-694 MHz band in Region 1 based on the results of the studies foreseen in Resolution 235 (WRC-15). It has to be noted that, regardless of any decision made at WRC-23, it does not impact EU Decision 2017/899 and does not create any obligation on the EU after 2030 to change the current harmonised use in the band 470-694 MHz.</p> <p>Therefore, in order to support the European Commission to respond to Article 7 of the EU decision 2017/899, there is a need for the RSPG to contribute, from an EU perspective, with a strategic vision for sub-700 MHz spectrum use, including an analysis of latest developments with a review of the background and recommendations of the 2015 RSPG Opinion, and the consideration of possible post-2030 scenarios, taking into account what is established in Article 4 of the EU Decision 2017/899.</p>

<b>Scope</b>	<p>Building on the 2015 RSPG opinion, RSPG will investigate the latest development, as underlined in Article 7 of the EU decision 2017/899, relating to the band 470-694 MHz and develop a strategic vision for sub-700 MHz spectrum use beyond 2030. This includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A review of the background and recommendations of its first opinion.</li> <li>• Discuss how the flexibility set out in Article 4 could be implemented in practice.</li> <li>• Develop/Describe possible technically feasible scenarios concerning development of use in this frequency band with relevant key assumptions and conditions, including potential consequences in terms of EU harmonisation framework in this band, in particular for post-2030, and taking into account the links with content regulation.</li> </ul> <p>This activity will not address WRC-23 agenda item 1.5 which remains to be addressed solely under the activity regarding the preparation of EU position for WRC-23.</p> <p>This activity will be the first step for RSPG to support the European Commission in its response to Article 7 of the Decision. The priority of RSPG will be to address bullet 2 above. RSPG intends to develop subsequent opinions if necessary, in a timely manner.</p>
<b>Planned deliverables and timing</b>	<p>RSPG Opinion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft Opinion for public consultation: February 2023</li> <li>• Final Opinion: June 2023</li> </ul>
<b>Analytical approach</b>	<p>Sharing a common knowledge base and discussions with an open mindset, in a think-tank style, in order to envisage societal and technical developments in the distant future (10 years and beyond).</p> <p>Use of the principles and some techniques of Strategic Foresight.</p>
<b>Project plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phase 1 – "diverge" phase, creating choices to hypothesise more possible futures.</li> <li>• Phase 2 – "converge" phase, describe appropriate choices compatible with the various hypothesised futures.</li> </ul>
<b>Dependencies</b>	<p>To be determined.</p>