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Electronic Communications Networks and Services
Radio Spectrum Policy Group
RSPG Secretariat

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RADIO SPECTRUM POLICY GROUP

Request for an Opinion on a Radio Spectrum Policy Programme

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Request for an Opinion on a Radio Spectrum Policy Programme (RSPP)

The Commission objective is to set up a new multiannual programme regarding radio spectrum policy that would lay the basis for spectrum management decisions in the 2025/2030 time horizon covering the various sectors and Union policies using spectrum. The Commission therefore intends to submit to the European Parliament and the Council a proposal for a new Radio Spectrum Policy Programme with the support of the RSPG.

Rationale

The first Radio Spectrum Policy Programme was established based on Article 8a of the Framework Directive by the Decision 243/2012/EU of the European Parliament and the Council. It set out policy orientations and objectives for the strategic planning and harmonization of the use of radio spectrum with the aim to ensure the functioning of the internal market in the Union policy areas involving the use of spectrum. It included *inter alia* a set of concrete actions to support the roll out of high-speed wireless broadband consistent with the Digital Agenda for Europe 2010 access objectives for 2020. Most of the provisions of the first RSPP took effect before or by July 2015.

In its opinion from February 2016 the RSPG noted that the objectives of the first RSPP had been largely achieved and recommended the renewal thereof, taking into account a number of new policy, regulatory and technological developments.

In September 2016, the Commission's strategy on European Gigabit Society defined a new set of strategic objectives to achieve Gigabit connectivity in the Union by 2025, *inter alia*, access to Internet at a speed of at least 100 Mb/s (downlink) for all European households and uninterrupted 5G coverage in all urban areas and on all major terrestrial transport paths. In addition, current developments in areas such as the IoT and fast emerging needs in vertical areas (e.g. eHealth, transport and energy) are expected to further push the connectivity targets in the future and lead to new generations of wireless communications beyond 5G. These increase the overall requirements to spectrum availability in terms of capacity and used bandwidth.

Over recent years, climate change has become a predominant topic in the Union policies and in December 2019, the European Green Deal (hereafter Green Deal) called for all EU actions and policies to support the Union's objective to become the world's first climate-neutral continent by 2050. The Green Deal, on the one side, recognized the enabling nature of digital technologies, including 5G, for attaining its sectorial goals and, on the other side, invited the digital sector to increase its environmental sustainability through, inter alia, more transparency

on the environmental impact of electronic communications and the application of more stringent measures for new network deployments.

The radio spectrum rules related to electronic communications were revised in the European Electronic Communications Code Directive (EECC or the 'Code'); while specific obligations apply from 20 December 2018, most provisions should be transposed by 21 December 2020. Article 4(4) of the Code confirmed the legal basis for the establishment of multi-annual radio spectrum policy programmes.

Scope of RSPG activity

The RSPG is invited to develop an opinion contributing to a new multiannual radio spectrum policy programme drafted by the Commission, taking into account technological developments and Union policy objectives, including the need to support Gigabit connectivity and climate neutrality targets. This programme should apply up to 2030 and should become the framework for spectrum management decisions addressing the growing and diversifying demand for high-speed wireless connectivity in line with Union policies.

The following topics could be considered:

- as a political target, making available at least 12 GHz of spectrum below 100 GHz (including already EU-harmonised spectrum) to promote innovative wireless services, including next generation mobile and wireless access systems (such as Wi-Fi), in support of the Union's Gigabit connectivity targets; spectrum availability should foster complementary and innovative authorisation regimes above 6 GHz taking into account the evolution of spectrum needs and the opportunity of using higher frequency bands;
- concrete coordinated actions to facilitate the take-up of shared spectrum use in the single market including cross-border trial projects and targeted spectrum management decisions;
- the positive impact of technological innovation, in particular artificial intelligence, on ensuring efficient spectrum use by, inter alia, enabling (dynamic) spectrum management and sharing;
- assessing the network evolution and spectrum needs of terrestrial broadcasting and PMSE for the delivery of innovative audiovisual media and the attainment of general interest objectives, taking into account broadband-broadcast convergence in the context of 5G and innovative use of the 'core' terrestrial broadcasting band below 700 MHz;
- specific needs for spectrum of SMEs in the context of innovative usage scenarios including in particular access to appropriate unlicensed spectrum;
- strategic policy approach to environmental sustainability of wireless systems in relation to spectrum authorisation and use[1]; in this regard, any sectoral spectrum needs for the specific purpose of combatting climate change (e.g. energy production) should be assessed;

[1] The Code (notably Article 44) allows environmental efficiency to be considered as part of network sharing, which in turn could maximise spectrum sharing in fulfilment of a general interest objective in the sense of Article 45(4));

- opportunities for coordination between civilian and military use of spectrum to ensure innovation and improve spectrum efficiency.

Therefore, in its opinion, RSPG should at least:

- assess which general provisions of the current RSPP are still relevant to be carried forward into a new RSPP and how they could be revised to better correspond to technological developments and Union policy objectives;

- suggest how much spectrum below 100 GHz (including already EU-harmonised spectrum) should be made available for wireless services within a defined time span in support of licensed as well as unlicensed spectrum access with view to next-generation systems (including 5G and beyond);

- reflect about concrete actions to improve spectrum efficiency by using technological innovations (in particular, artificial intelligence), notably exploiting such innovations, inter alia, in the context of (dynamic) spectrum sharing and cross-border cooperation;

- reflect about setting environment sustainability commitments for wireless systems; in this regard consider, if relevant, specific measures applicable to selection procedures for individual licences and the licence conditions in order to pursue environmental sustainability goals;

- reflect on other Union policies, e.g. space policy, that may need to be addressed in a new RSPP in terms of spectrum needs, innovative developments or more efficient use of spectrum.

The RSPG Opinion should also benefit from inputs from other RSPG activities identified in the 2020-2021 RSPG Work Programme that relate directly to the above issues.

Planned type of deliverable

RSPG opinion

[Public][Stakeholders] Workshops [with appropriate experts and policy specialists]

Time schedule

Draft opinion: February 2021

Final opinion: June 2021