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RADIO SPECTRUM POLICY GROUP

Progress Report of the RSPG Working Group on European Spectrum Strategy

RPSG Working Group European Spectrum Strategy

Progress Report to RSPG Plenary

June 2019

The RSPG Working Group on European Spectrum Strategy (WG ESS) identified 6 key themes that should be considered under this workstream. The six themes are:

- Innovation
- Sharing
- Harmonisation
- The role of market mechanisms
- Meeting the needs of all spectrum users
- Receivers and Standards.

Our January update to Plenary noted initial discussions of innovation and sharing at the stakeholder workshop held in Dublin in September 2018 and the RSPG Stakeholder Briefing held in Budapest in December 2018. A further discussion on spectrum sharing was held at Plenary in January 2019.

The Working Group has had two further meetings, in February in London and May in Dublin, and discussed all six themes. The issues and actions emerging under each of the themes include:

- Innovation – Technology and service neutrality is important for innovation but has been challenging to achieve in practice. Also important are the needs of smaller innovators and new entrants – potential ways to support them include regulatory 'sand boxes' and helping them to engage with standardisation processes, whilst ensuring that those processes do not create barriers to innovation.

- Sharing – Looking forward, sharing is likely to be the norm or more common situation, rather than the exception. For example, making a band available for new harmonised use will not automatically mean clearing out all existing users, and industry may need greater incentives to develop new sharing mechanisms. The Working Group will set up a special focus on sharing and examine the potential for sharing opportunities in more detail, including trials, "sandboxes" and the future role of dynamic spectrum access, potentially across a number of different bands and regions / countries.

- Harmonisation – Benefits have been derived from good technical harmonisation in the EU and across Europe, via ECC and ETSI, including economies of scale for both network and consumer equipment, enabling swift deployment of networks and availability of services and assisting in efficient spectrum usage across the EU by managing international interference. However, technical harmonisation is changing, and challenging questions were asked including: are there circumstances where harmonisation might stifle innovation? Is the current approach to harmonisation compatible with principle of technology and service neutrality? Should harmonisation be time limited, or subject to period review? The group concluded that 26 GHz heralds the start of the "new normal" where co-existence within bands rather than clearance of bands is likely to be more

prevalent, and this might mean a more nuanced approach to the development of technical harmonisation decisions in the future.

- The role of market mechanisms – There are a range of different understandings of the benefits and limits of market mechanisms, particularly beyond the use of auctions. Although in principle they may support innovation and sharing, there are concerns that trading is inhibited by competitive dynamics leading to hoarding; that 'speculation' leads to inefficient spectrum use; and that liberalisation to allow higher value use can be perceived as granting 'windfalls' to private companies.

- Receivers and Standards – Although requiring receiver parameters as part of RED is a step forward, there is more to do to ensure better receiver standards. We could set more explicit expectations about the interference environment, including that receivers should not listen to and constrain future evolution of neighbours.

- Meeting the needs of all spectrum users – This is of continuing and growing importance as an even greater range of radio spectrum users and uses are expected to emerge in the future. Many users will be newcomers, and so we should be particularly aware of their needs.

Next steps:

- The RSPG stakeholder event on 28th May will include a session on European Spectrum Strategy
- RSPG will run a second European Spectrum Strategy Stakeholder Workshop in London on **28th June**
- The Working Group is developing a paper which will analyse the issues raised and identify actions to address them. A draft of the paper will be discussed at its next meeting.