

Questionnaire on cross-border agreements (EU and non EU) in the 3.4-3.8 GHz band

5G / MFCN cross-border agreements:

- Do you have some MFCN use which is not in conformity with EU decision (xx) and when this legacy use is expected to switch-off?
Currently, the 3400-3800 MHz band is used in Romania based on a TDD only channel arrangement, in accordance with the EC decision no. (EU) 2019/235.
There are four public operators in the band, their licences being granted for the provision of MFCN networks, in a technology-neutral manner.
One operator has a TDD allotment larger than 100 MHz, while the other three have TDD allotments smaller than 80 MHz. All licences are valid until the end of 2025.
A governmental network is currently in operation in this band, until 2025 as well.
90 MHz are currently not occupied and will be made available during the forthcoming 5G auction (which will be a multiband selection procedure, including the 3400-3800 MHz band).
- What is the status of cross-border agreements applicable to 5G/MFCN in the 3.4-3.8 GHz with each of neighbouring countries (EU and non EU)? Do these agreements include elements regarding synchronization and frame structures? Is there a difficulty regarding the synchronisation with legacy MFCN networks (e.g. WiMax)?
In the past, there was a request from Hungary that our country be included in a multilateral Technical Arrangement on border coordination in the 3.4-3.8 GHz band, initiated by Hungary and signed in 2015 by the national frequency management authorities of Hungary, Serbia and several other countries. At that moment, Romania agreed, in principle, with the text of this arrangement but could not sign it.
This matter is currently under study, taking into account the latest regulatory developments. (The above said arrangement applies the provisions of the EC decision no. 2014/276/EU and is technically based on the CEPT recommendation ECC/REC/(15)01 in its initial version, while the most recent amendment of this recommendation is dated February 2020, implementing the provisions of the EC decision no. (EU) 2019/235.)
Up to now, there has been no direct discussion initiated with Bulgaria, Serbia and Ukraine.
During a bilateral coordination meeting, at expert level, with the national frequency management authority of the Republic of Moldova – which took place in June 2018 – a consensus, in principle, was achieved for the subsequent signing of a bilateral agreement, which would be based on the text of the above said multilateral Technical Arrangement.
- How the risk of interference from 5G base station to 5G base station at the border is addressed? Is there any procedure for the case when real interference occurs (e.g. method of measurement, exchange of information, common measures, etc)?
Given the not intensive use in border areas so far, we haven't experienced difficulties in these areas (no interference reports were received) up to now, in the 3.4-3.8 GHz band.
In this context, it is important to note that there were situations in the past when operators (from both sides of the border) negotiated directly and reached a compromise solution to solve some interference issues. Thus, an official intervention of the authorities was no longer necessary.
Nevertheless, if interference situations will occur and will be reported, they will be treated on a case by case basis, according to the relevant provisions of the ITU Radio Regulations.

5G / others services cross-border agreements:

- Could you describe the elements of cross-border agreements regarding the coexistence between 5G and other services in the 3.4-3.8 GHz band, (concerned services, coexistence method, expected impact on 5G deployment ...)?

Based on our current knowledge, we estimate that the issue of other services in the 3.4-3.8 GHz band would be most relevant in the relationship with Ukraine.

Unfortunately, the requested information is not available, as we didn't start discussions with Ukraine on this matter.

Cross border negotiation difficulties (EU and non EU)

- Do you meet any difficulty in current cross border negotiations (EU and non EU)?

Given that the use of the 3.4-3.8 GHz band has not been intensive in border areas up to now (and we deem this situation will not change for the foreseeable future), there is not a pressing need, in our opinion, for border coordination agreements.

Nevertheless, in the next period of time, we'll consider the option of signing technical arrangements on border coordination with neighboring EU countries, taking into account the new version of the CEPT Recommendation ECC/REC/(15)01 and the EC decision no. (EU) 2019/235.

Also, we shall analyze the possibility of concluding agreements with neighboring non-EU countries, bearing in mind that the mobile service in the 3600-3800 MHz band has a secondary allocation only, according to the Art. 5 of ITU Radio Regulations in force.

The process may be easier in the relationship with Serbia, as this country has already co-signed the multilateral technical arrangement initiated by Hungary.

Based on the information provided above, we foresee that some difficulties may arise in the negotiations with Ukraine.

- Could such difficulty impact 5G deployment and why?

The impact of cross-border coordination difficulties on 5G deployment depends on the actual spectrum use in border areas, on both sides of the border concerned.

The impact would be significant in densely populated border areas, where there is a clear economic interest of the operators from both countries to implement 5G.