



Brussels, 20 February 2013

VICE-PRESIDENT NEELIE KROES JOINS THE RSPG DISCUSSION ON POLICY PRIORITIES IN THE AREA OF WIRELESS BROADBAND

The high-level policy dialogue between Vice-President Kroes and the Members of the RSPG was focused on the strategic importance of spectrum for Wireless Broadband and the future of the 700 MHz band. In her address to the group the Commissioner responsible for the Digital Agenda highlighted the importance of the input from the advisory group for future policy initiatives to boost the wireless broadband ecosystem. She further pointed out the need for an EU strategy concerning the future of the 700 MHz band as part of a sustainable solution for the whole UHF band under consideration of all stakeholder interests.

In addition to this policy dialogue, draft opinions and reports on wireless broadband, sectoral needs, bilateral coordination, WRC-15, and Interference Management were discussed by the group. The draft opinion on wireless broadband was discussed and the launch of the public consultation can be expected in March. The adoption of the report on bilateral coordination in the context of the 700 MHz was postponed to the next RSPG plenary meeting in June.

Furthermore, the RSPG today elected Mr Finn Petersen Deputy Director General of the Danish Business Authority, as its new Deputy Chairperson in succession to Mr Gilles Brégant, who was elected in November as RSPG Chairperson.

In presenting the outcome of the Plenary the RSPG Chairman, Mr. Brégant, declared: *"We had an inspiring dialogue with Vice-President Kroes. The question on the future of the 700 MHz band is indeed very important and different views of stakeholders in all Member States need to be considered. I am glad that we were able to make significant progress in the RSPG Work Programme, e.g. with the adoption of the draft opinion on wireless broadband that is now being prepared for public consultation. Finally, I would like welcome Mr. Finn Petersen in its new role as Deputy Chairperson and I am looking forward to work with him."*

The following is a summary of the key policy items in today's agenda:

1. Strategic Challenges facing Europe in addressing the Growing Spectrum Demand for Wireless Broadband

The identification of spectrum to address the growing demand for broadband services has taken center stage in European spectrum policy. Furthermore, the European and international regulatory environments have recently evolved with the adoption of the first Radio Spectrum Policy Programme and with the results of the World Radio Conference 2012 respectively. Therefore, the European Commission seeks the advice of the RSPG on the strategic issues and challenges to be addressed in Europe in order to meet the objective to satisfy the demand for wireless broadband services. This also aims at providing transparency on the policy approach, and to provide stakeholders with information which may be useful in establishing their own individual plans, including timing elements. The draft RSPG opinion lists new frequency bands which are being considered for wireless broadband to respond to the spectrum demand and recommends a number of actions to facilitate the release of these bands and to address many other strategic issues in relation to wireless broadband.

2. Licensed Shared Access

Following the 2011 RSPG Report on collective use of spectrum and other sharing approaches the RSPG work programme foresees an in-depth assessment of the concept of Licensed Shared Access so as to explore the viability of this approach and carry out a consultation amongst EU Member States. In line with the Radio Spectrum Policy Programme (RSPP), the Commission supports the specific concept of LSA as one form of sharing and encourages further development in light of incentives and legal certainty.

The planned RSPG Opinion is expected to provide advice to the Commission on:

- the state of implementation and best practices as well as future plans for LSA implementations in Member States
- the main features of an operational Licensed Shared Access (LSA) concept and as a second step make recommendations how it could be taken forward to encourage more shared use of spectrum
- the promotion of the LSA concept at EU level and its possible implementation in the EU member States, where appropriate.

3. Strategic sectoral spectrum needs

The RSPG activity examines the likely development of various strategic sectors, in particular those listed in the RSPP, in order to identify emerging spectrum needs and demand over the coming years. Furthermore, the activity will explore possible synergies including with commercial networks when applicable.

4. EU Assistance in Bilateral coordination

In the next few years Member States face a number of challenges in the field of cross border coordination amongst Member States and between Member States and non EU countries. The RSPG activity aims at giving guidance on the obligations stemming from the Regulatory Framework and the Radio Spectrum Policy Program, in particular for proceeding within set deadlines to authorise the already harmonized bands, including the first digital dividend in the 800 MHz band, for ensuring the most efficient use of spectrum, for addressing possible cases of cross border interference.

The activity also includes the introduction of the RSPG “good office” procedure for assisting Member States and possibly accession countries within the intra-EU cross border coordination process.

Finally a new RSPG Report will address the new complexity deriving from the possible implementation of the 700 MHz band in terms of cross-border coordination.

5. Preparation of Common Policy Objectives for WRC-15

As part of the preparation for the next World Radiocommunication Conference in 2015 (WRC-15) the RSPG shall again assist the Member States and the EU with common approaches in order to bring the best out of the negotiations. The RSPG should firstly identify the main themes of the WRC-15 agenda related to EU policies at the earliest possible time and secondly the common policy objectives for WRC-15 in relation to those themes. Among others, the following issues should be addressed:

- Electronic communications services, in particular the issue of availability of spectrum for wireless broadband data applications.
- Spectrum for aviation, maritime and road safety purposes in relation to EU transport policy.
- The importance of the availability of spectrum under appropriate conditions for scientific use which may have important environmental and safety implications.
- The international regulatory procedures associated with satellite operation and WRC-15 agenda items on satellite allocation issues in relation with EU space policy.

6. Efficient interference management through exchange of regulatory best practices concerning regulation and/or standardisation

The aim of this activity is to identify how to take advantage of the characteristics and capabilities of the most advanced digital technologies and filtering techniques, including in receivers, and how these advances are reflected in the best practices concerning regulation and standardisation in order to foster a more efficient use of spectrum.

In particular, this activity should create a common understanding on the solutions found at national level to address interference issues and on the specific role that could be played by improved receiver standards in helping devices to avoid interference from other users and, thereby, to improve spectrum efficiency. The group will emphasize the role of receiver parameters in spectrum management in the context of the proposed revision of the R&TTE Directive.

All public documents will be made available on the RSGP's website:

http://rspg.ec.europa.eu/ref_doc/index_en.htm or on CIRCABC

Note to the editor:

The Radio Spectrum Policy Group (RSPG) was created by a European Commission Decision in 2002, amended in December 2009. Comprising the national spectrum authorities of the 27 EU Member States, the RSPG provides the Commission and other EU institutions with advice on high level policy matters in relation to spectrum. Representatives of the EEA countries, the European Parliament and the regional and international bodies may attend as observers. Before being transmitted to the Commission, the RSPG's expert opinions are normally submitted to public consultations of all spectrum users, both commercial and non-commercial, as well as of any other interested stakeholders. The RSPG also publishes Reports on key issues in spectrum matters. The RSPG therefore constitutes a unique platform for Member States, the Commission and all relevant stakeholders to discuss and co-ordinate regulation of radio spectrum.