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RADIO SPECTRUM POLICY GROUP

**14th Progress Report of the RSPG Working Group
on cross-border coordination**

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The Working Group has held one meeting, 17nd January in Maisons-Alfort. The report of this meeting is attached in annex.

TV and FM interference

With regard to the implementation of the Decreto-Legge n°145 in Italy, the Italian administration confirmed the switch-off of the interfering transmitters on 30th November 2016 except for the Marche region where the switch-off was finalized on 16th January 2017. The neighbouring countries have confirmed so far the effectiveness of the switch-off but further measurements are necessary in Croatia to take into account the later switch-off in the Marche region. Few remaining cases of interference not covered by the Decreto-Legge n°145 (e.g. interference from national MUX) are still under scrutiny within the Good Offices. In addition, it should be remembered that the Decreto-Legge was not covering protection of rights of neighbouring countries not actually in operation but envisaged for additional programmes or for the migration of television below 694 MHz.

The Good Offices Working Group reviewed the legal situation in the FM band in Italy and concluded that the only solution to solve interference would be for AGCOM to adopt a plan for FM broadcasting and for Italian ministry to have effectively the power to enforce it. Such a process would require modifications of the current Italian law which currently plans for such process only after DAB+ reach a sufficient penetration, which is not expected in the short/medium term. The merit of a letter from the Commission to the Italian Government, requesting such legislative action was discussed and it was decided that in this case such a letter could be useful.

RSPG should recommend the Commission to write to the Italian administration to request legislative actions supporting the definition of a FM broadcasting plan by AGCOM and empowering the ministry to enforce it.

Good Offices for the 700 MHz band

The Working Group has considered the responses to the questionnaire *on cross-border coordination issues regarding 700 MHz spectrum clearance and migration of broadcasting service below 694 MHz*.

All 28 EU Member States have kindly responded to the questionnaire, as well as Macedonia, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey. Some maps are provided in a separate document to describe the status of spectrum clearance and migration as well as the progress in terms of bilateral coordination.

The overall progress in defining spectrum clearance and migration dates and process is good and the bilateral/multilateral cross-border coordination is well underway, as shown in the maps. However, several hot areas have been identified:

- SEDDIF area where there are uncertainties on the target dates of the end of migration, a need to better understand the plans of countries outside EU in this area and, ultimately, a need to investigate potential transitional plan if the dates are diverging.
- Italy which needs to define urgently a target date and to progress negotiations with all neighbours
- West Mediterranean areas, given uncertainties on plans of North-African countries
- Cyprus given uncertainties on plans of Middle-East countries. In addition, **the Commission is invited to consider providing assistance to Cyprus which claims that Turkey refuses to engage in technical coordination discussions.**
- Baltic area, given uncertainties on plans of Russia and Belarus, which is likely to require the negotiation of a transition plan.

More generally, **Member States should ensure that their expected target date for the end of migration of TV below 694 MHz is clarified as soon as possible** even when it is not formally decided, since this information will enable to assess the risk of a domino effect in case one country is migrating later than its neighbours.

The Good Offices also identified the fact that many countries have not yet decided the start of migration, **which may create a risk due to the time for migration or for preparing migration which may be underestimated**, in particular when there is a need to change transmission/coding broadcasting technology. Preparing the migration and informing population is likely to take about 1 year (as shown by the examples of Germany, France, ...).

As shown above, in many cases, where neighbouring countries migration plans involve different dates for migration, there will also be a need to develop **transition plans** facilitating the migration of television below 694 MHz and the deployment of 700 MHz for mobile at different dates at the borders. For example, one may consider the transitional use of TV Channels in the 700MHz band by the country where migration to mobile is occurring later than their neighbor. Such transitional use could occur outside the 2x30 MHz or preferentially in the terminal receive band rather than in the base station receive band.

The Good Offices Working Group is wishing **to reissue the questionnaire for responses before 30th April**. The questions will remain unchanged, so that each country will only be required to modify the responses to reflect the progress achieved in the meantime. A cover note, as discussed at the Good Office's meeting on 17th January, will provide additional guidance.

Next meeting

A full meeting is planned on 11th May in Vilnius.

REPORT
RSPG WORKING GROUP
« GOOD OFFICES »
Maisons-Alfort, 17nd January 2017

1. Implementation of the Decreto-Legge n°145 and Beauty Contest

Italy informed the group on 1st December that, in accordance with the information provided during the RSPG meeting, all interfering TV transmitters were switched off except in the Marche region, due to the situation in this region after the earthquake.

Italy reported during the meeting that the switch-off of the interfering TV transmitters were completed in the Marche region between 9 to 16 January. Channels which have been switched-off are: 21, 23, 28, 29, 31, 33, 34, 39, 41, 45, 53, 59. The total number of the transmitters which have been switched-off is 113

Slovenia measurement confirmed the lower level of interference and that the switch-off is effective.

Croatia also performed measurements of the TV interference and detected lower levels of interference from regions D5 (relating to FVG and Veneto) and D9 (relating to Puglia). On the other hand, Croatia could not confirm results of switch off for E-R, Abruzzo and Molise due to the influence of TV transmitters in Marche which were not yet switched-off.

Croatia considers that, due to difficult weather conditions for terrain measurements and unfavorable sea propagation, results are preliminary and non-decisive and will perform additional measurements to confirm the switch off and monitor the development of TV interference situation. Italy should provide the list of transmitters which have been switched off by regions with additional data: Name / Location (GPS coordinates) / No of channel / Network Id/ Id of programme / Switched off or moved to No of channel, since this information can help in determining corresponding interferences resolved and detecting signals from Italy.

It was reminded that, as stated in the RSPG Report, the switch-off of channels used by Slovenia and Croatia was covering only the protection of internationally coordinated channels actually operated by neighbouring administrations. The use by Italy of some other channels for which neighbouring countries have rights in accordance with bilateral and international agreements, although these rights are currently not being operated, is increased. In particular, Croatia emphasized that there are some new interference cases on Croatian coordinated channels which are planned for 700 MHz release (e.g. Ch. 23, 43, 46 in D5; 29, 43 in D9, etc.).

2. Situation on TV interference

Malta indicated that the level of interference on channel 43 and 5 remains low, probably due to the winter propagation conditions.

Italy indicated that the Administrative Court (TAR) definitively rejected, on 2nd December 2016, the request of the broadcaster Canale 33, operating on channel 43 from Erice site to switch-on again that transmitter.

France reported that the situation is stable, with only remaining interference cases with Corse.

Croatia reminded that there is still interference on channel 57 from Italian national broadcaster and the situation is unchanged.

3. Situation on FM interference

The meeting reviewed the situation on FM interference from Italy. All neighbouring countries are complaining about such interference although some solutions are sometimes found (France, Malta) with the FM operators.

The situation at the border between Slovenia and Italy is particularly worrying due to a deadlock situation: Italy considers that the situation in GE-84 is not equitable and also that the actual use of the band, in some cases, around the border of both countries, is unbalanced, but Slovenia can only consider renegotiating rights if Italy is able to guarantee protection of the Slovenian rights. The difficulty is not in the ability of defining a new plan but in the confidence that it will be effectively implemented by Italian broadcasters.

Italy asked to have a bilateral meeting, as soon as possible, to discuss, without prejudice of the above difficulty, the real need of both countries.

The good offices working group reviewed the legal situation in the FM band in Italy and concluded that the only solution would be for AGCOM to adopt a plan for FM broadcasting and for Italian ministry to have the power to enforce it. This would request modifications of the Italian law which currently plans for such process only after DAB+ reach a sufficient penetration, which is not expected in the short/medium term.

RSPG should recommend EC to write to the Italian administration to request legislative actions supporting the definition of an FM broadcasting plan by AGCOM and the empowering the ministry to enforce it.

4. Improvement of the “maps” (results of the questionnaire)

The meeting requested the following improvement:

- a. To include a map for question 1 (status of the national plan)
- b. To add in the interactive map the information about transmission/coding before/after migration
- c. Improving editorial elements on the “coordination” map
- d. To use “worst case” information in particular in case of inconsistency or uncertainty
- e. Administrations to check the data

5. Discussions on “hot areas” for coordination

Several “hot areas” were discussed during the meeting:

- SEDDIF area: this area is probably the most complicated in terms of number of interactions between affected countries in a small zone. The coordination process is working well within SEDDIF but there is a need to address urgently the following:
 - For countries not having yet decided the target date of the end of migration, to put forward an expected date
 - Further exchange of information with countries outside EU (Serbia, Bosnia ...) in order to understand when the migration could take place in a coordinated manner and to investigate potential transitional plan (i.e., use of channels in the 700 MHz band duplex gap or in the downlink rather than in the uplink)
 - Coordination negotiation with Italy needs to start as early as possible
 - Involvement of EC (for assistance with countries outside EU) may need to be considered at a later stage.
- Italy needs to make an assumption as early as possible on the target date of the end of migration of TV below 694 MHz and on the number of MUX as objective of the coordination negotiation, on the configuration of the networks. Italy needs to progress negotiation with all its neighbours.
- West Mediterranean area: involved EU countries should try to get information on the date of migration on North African countries. Involvement of EC (for assistance with countries outside EU) may need to be considered at a later stage.
- Cyprus
 - EC should provide assistance to Cyprus about their claim that Turkey objects to frequency assignments requiring coordination and refuses to engage in technical coordination discussions
 - Cyprus should try to get information on the date of migration of Middle East countries.
- Baltic area
 - The cross-border coordination is difficult in the southern Baltic area due to the coordination with Kaliningrad area and with Belarus. In absence of certainty on migration date of Russian Federation and Belarus, a transition plan is to be negotiated.

6. General conclusions

Several conclusions were drawn by the meeting:

- The expected target date for the end of migration of TV below 694 MHz is to be known even when it is not formally decided, since this information will enable to assess the risk of a domino effect in case one country is migrating late
- The fact that many countries have not yet decided the start of migration may create a risk due to the time for migration or for preparing migration which may be underestimated by some countries, in particular when there is a need to change transmission/coding broadcasting technology. Preparing the migration and informing population is likely to take about 1 year (as shown by the examples of Germany, France, ...).
- The cross-border coordination is progressing well in all areas. The “good offices” noted the new cluster group BSDDIF (Black Sea Digital Dividend Implementation

Forum) gathering black sea countries apart Russian Federation and progressing well the definition of a new plan. It noted also the upcoming Ionian group and the fact that the Adriatic area is corresponding on one side to Italy - San Marino and on the other side to the SEDDIF area.

- There is a need to address also in cross-border negotiation the transition plan in case there is a difference in migration timing.

7. Follow-up of the questionnaire

- The questionnaire will be re-issued, for response before 30th of April with the same questions and a cover note:
 - Asking for updating information (national plan status, dates of migration/authorization, cross-border coordination negotiation status)
 - Requesting to specify clearly under response to question 5 what is the DTT transmission technology(ies) and video coding standard(s) before and after the migration below 694 MHz.
 - Requesting to ensure that the expected date of end of migration is clearly specified (ie, administrations not having decided yet a date are invited to provide a target date)
- The current maps will be distributed together with the questionnaire and administrations are invited to check the data