

Radio Spectrum Policy Group

Report on spectrum aspects related to
***"The future of radio broadcasting in Europe:
Identified needs, opportunities and possible
ways forward"***

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Background information

- Activity initiated by RSPG at beginning 2010
- Report adopted on 10 February 2011
Available at http://rspg.ec.europa.eu/consultations/index_en.htm
- WG led by PTS, Sweden
- Methodology:
 - 1. Round table discussions with national administrations on 4 themes: public policy objectives, market issues, EU dimension, spectrum use
 - 2. Input from:
 - Questionnaire to MS (24 responses)
 - Views from most relevant EU associations*
- RSPG postponed decision on follow-up to its next plenary in June 2011

* 11 responses including AER, DRM, EBU, ETSI, SAP, EHDRA, Digital Europe, World DMB Forum

Key findings

- Information sharing between administrations highly appreciated
- Fragmented situation, no single market
- FM congested in almost all Member States
- Only 2 or 3 successful national deployments of digital radio (UK, DK, DE) → deadlocks in most other MS
- Current developments led by public interest, not market demand?
- No political “appetite” to push analogue switch-off, nor objective benefits (many FM radio receivers in use)



Feedback from industry & sectorial organisations

- One standard, or a flexible combination of standards -> more certainty for investments
- Co-ordination of transition plans (e.g. common milestones)
- Regulations should also accommodate the needs of local and regional radio broadcasting
- Review complementary and alternative technologies including IP based digital multimedia systems
- Promotion of “European” standards
- Role of satellite radio

Informative but no breakthrough
in terms of possible way forward in Europe



RSPG Conclusions

- “Huge need” to identify ways forward regarding the development of Radio (Sound) Broadcasting in Europe!
- No advantage to set targets for analogue FM switch-off, no digital dividend
- Digital radio to be seen as supplemental services as compared to analogue. Should also address the congestion issue in FM
- Future = “set of standards” or “mix of platforms” including Internet radio? Are we at a “cross-road”?
- Feeling that a need for a common strategy exists but nobody has magic solution. Cause of current gridlock seems external to spectrum issues



RSPG Proposals

- Examine possibility of coordination of national plans (time tables)
- Annual update and review of national situations
- Call on main industry initiatives to help shaping a strategy
- Study the need for a technical methodology for implementation narrow band radio systems (e.g. DRM+)
- Other suggestions:
 - Study the extension of band III for radio use by including 230-240 MHz sub-band
 - Clarify future of L-Band (too much uncertainty at the moment)
 - Encourage MS to take advantage of “receiver profile” adopted by industry

Next steps under consideration by RSPG

- RSPG to review spectrum options for narrow band radio broadcasting
- Organise an exchange of views/information between relevant parties (Industry, Commission services, CBISS, RSPG, EPRA) ?
 - Common strategy towards a single market for digital radio (value chain/business model scenario, standards, receiver profiles/requirements, time table)
 - Digital Radio to be added to Digital Agenda ?

Suggestions to foster EU policy support for digital radio

- Acknowledge absence of market push
- > concentrate on public interest of digital radio
- Demonstrate consistently the public benefits, before pushing for common strategy in single market
 - Value for EU citizens, quantify when possible (better quality, lower costs, more programmes, more pluralism?)
 - Value for EU economy (increased turnover in radio sector ?)
 - Energy savings/environment ?
- Address upfront some widespread concerns
 - Do not focus on switching-off analogue FM but explain why FM is not sufficient
 - See synergy with Wifi/Internet radio rather than rejecting it
- Only as a second step, push for a common strategy to address the single market issue
 - Options?:
 - Deadline to MS for having a national plan to introduce digital radio + try synchronise implementation time tables
 - Address remaining spectrum issue (if any)
 - Common solution for single market of receivers (Euro-receiver profile, common user experience)
- Anchor initiative politically in Digital Agenda for Europe ?



To close, five candid questions... ... responses welcome!

1. Is mass market access to Wifi/IP radio (next to digital radio) viable from a network capacity/economic viewpoint? If not, why?
2. How can we reconcile business models in analogue FM and Digital Radio without cannibalising each others?
3. Is there a significant need for digital radio broadcasting outside of the multiplex approach (to accommodate smaller radio business needs)?
4. What about vehicle reception? What can be done to speed up take-up of digital radio in vehicle?
5. Are the current receiver profiles fully appropriate? What is the market response since their introduction?



I would like to thank EBU for
organising this exchange of views

I look forward to today's debates
with the greatest interest!

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Disclaimer: the views expressed in this presentation are those of the author and cannot be regarded as stating an official position of the European Commission.

