

# ETNO Reflection Document on the Digital Dividend in Europe

## Executive Summary

ETNO supports the harmonisation of part of the 470-862 MHz band for broadband wireless access as proposed in the Commission Communication "Reaping the full benefits of digital dividend in Europe".

Therefore, ETNO supports the identification of a reserved harmonised sub-band of the 470 – 862 MHz for bi-directional broadband communications and favours a flexible channel plan with different options, also extending below 790 MHz, in order to be applied in particular national situations.

## 1. Introduction

Thanks to improved spectrum efficiency, transition from analogue to digital technology should allow both provision of new and enhanced TV usages and innovative broadband wireless telecommunication services as stated by the "RSPG opinion on EU spectrum policy implications of the digital dividend".

This happens in a context where new multimedia communication carriers develop further (such as cable, satellite, ADSL, PLC operators) and new types of consumer behaviour appear, based on interactivity and availability of non-linear contents. This evolution became possible thanks to the development of the Internet and the blurring of frontiers between telecommunications and broadcasting.

During the last WRC-07, the band 790-862 MHz has been allocated to the mobile service and identified for IMT in Europe from the year 2015. This amount of spectrum is in fact limited when compared to the frequency bands identified for mobile in other regions. Nevertheless, it will allow a valuable positive evolution of spectrum usage in Europe and some countries have decided to start using this capacity earlier than 2015, in accordance with their timetable for digital switchover.

It should be noted that these measures do not limit mobile service to this frequency range. The Radio Regulations and the GE06 agreement enable mobile services to operate anywhere in the 470-862MHz frequency range, subject to bilateral agreement among the countries that might be affected in order to avoid harmful interference.

The band plan for mobile services in the UHF band will play a crucial role in enabling mobile operators to make the most efficient use of this spectrum, and hence to provide the greatest economic and social benefit.

In the meantime the European Commission published the “Communication on reaping the full benefits of the digital dividend in Europe via a common approach to the use of the spectrum released by the digital switchover”.<sup>1</sup>

The European Parliament has produced a Draft Report proposing a common approach for the Digital Dividend.<sup>2</sup>

## 2. ETNO view

ETNO wishes to highlight the following points:

- The propagation characteristics of spectrum below 1GHz make it ideal for ensuring the coverage of rural areas. Allocating spectrum to wireless broadband communications as part of the Digital Dividend would help to bridge the digital divide and to deliver advanced multimedia services to the whole public across the EU's 27 Member States<sup>3</sup>.
- ETNO believes that a solution that allows the broadcasters to further develop their services and telecom operators to offer new broadband communication services is possible (the so-called win-win situation).
- The success of mobile technologies is based on a harmonised approach (global roaming, economies of scales, design of systems and minimization of guard bands).
- ETNO welcomes and shares the view expressed by the European Commission that a spectrum sub-band for bi-directional wireless access networks would be coordinated at EU level. This sub-band shall be separated from the rest of the broadcasting band in accordance with technical studies already done by ECC/TG4.
- ETNO believes that spectrum for mobile TV should be made available in the UHF band in all Member States, at a minimum to support a single 8MHz DVB-H multiplex, but this does not necessarily imply the harmonisation of a dedicated sub-band across Europe.
- In line with the EC Communication and the Draft EP Report, studies and harmonised designation of parts of this Digital Dividend for bi-directional broadband communications shall be done as soon as possible, in continuation of the studies already done by ECC/TG4 and following the second mandate to CEPT.<sup>4</sup>
- In line with the agreements reached at WRC-07, ETNO supports the harmonisation of the 790-862 MHz band all over Europe for bi-directional

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<sup>1</sup> COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS  
Reaping the full benefits of the digital dividend in Europe: A common approach to the use of the spectrum released by the digital switchover (COM(2007)0700)

<sup>2</sup> DRAFT REPORT on reaping the full benefits of the digital dividend in Europe: a common approach to the use of the spectrum released by the digital switchover (2008/2099(INI))

<sup>3</sup> Getting the most out of the Digital Dividend – SVP (March, 2008)

<sup>4</sup> Draft second Mandate to CEPT on technical considerations regarding harmonisation options for the digital dividend in the European Union (RSCOM08-06 final)

communications. Additional channel plans extending below 790 MHz should be developed in order to take into account diverse national situations and allow a flexible implementation.

- The Digital Dividend issue requires an immediate and quick political response. ETNO considers that the European Union would use its political power to foster an early agreement on the Digital Dividend across Europe.
- In the meantime, ETNO encourages national Administrations to start considering how to make available part of the “Digital Dividend” obtained after the switchover to digital terrestrial television broadcasting for mobile services in a harmonised way and in line with the agreements reached by RRC-06 and WRC-07. ETNO considers that any spectrum that will be liberated after analogue switch-off should be available in a non discriminatory way.

### **3. Conclusion**

ETNO believes that the success of the development of innovative services is based on extensive cooperation between the different economic sectors involved in electronic communications and on an appropriate use of the radio spectrum resource.

ETNO support the goals of the European Commission to reap the full benefits of the digital dividend in Europe and to develop a common approach to the use of the spectrum released by the digital switchover.

ETNO believes that the designation of a spectrum sub-band for bi-directional wireless access networks should be coordinated at EU level, as proposed by the Union, and particularly ETNO supports the identification of the 790-862 MHz as the band harmonised all over Europe for bi-directional communications. A flexible channel plan extending below 790 MHz should be also developed with different options in order to take into account diverse national situations and allow flexibility.

Broadcasting networks shall therefore not be deployed anymore in such harmonised band for compatibility reasons.

ETNO considers that regulatory authorities should take a non discriminatory approach for the availability of spectrum that will be liberated after analogue switch-off.

ETNO highlights that with such an approach, broadcasting, as well as telecommunication services, will take advantage of the progress of digitalisation enhancing the European market for the benefit of European citizens.