

# Position paper

## ETNO Reflection Document on the first Radio Spectrum Policy Programme



April 2010

### Introduction

ETNO welcomes the Commission decision to invite stakeholders to provide inputs for the preparation of the first multi-annual Radio Spectrum Policy Programme (RSPP) to be adopted by the European Parliament and the Council.

ETNO agrees with the Commission that spectrum issues are to be considered of strategic importance for the European Union. Accordingly, we strongly support coordination of spectrum management policies and common initiatives at European Union-level.

ETNO agrees with the European Commission to extend the RSPP to all types of radio spectrum users within its jurisdiction and provide incentives in order that the goal of spectrum optimisation applies to everyone -- and not only to electronic communications networks (ECN) and network services (ECNS).

Furthermore, consumer demand for bandwidth is growing very rapidly and ETNO expects the mobile spectrum demand to continue to increase in the coming years. Even while the industry works to improve spectral efficiency, spectrum usage is growing at such a rate that, without additional spectrum allocation, the industry will not be able to keep up. Other regions in the world are taking more aggressive steps to add commercial mobile spectrum. The U.S. National Broadband Plan, approved recently, recommends making 500 MHz of

spectrum newly available for broadband by 2020, with a benchmark of making 300 MHz available by 2015.

In this global scenario the European Union should also have an active long term policy to increase spectrum resources for mobile broadband. In this regard, a longer term vision is necessary on spectrum strategy in the EU. The Radio Spectrum Policy Program will need to take into account trends that extend to at least 2020.

On the specific issues raised in the Call for Input, we are pleased to submit to you the comments reported in the following section.

## Responses to consultation questions

### Economic recovery and growth

- 1) Against this background, has a sufficient amount of spectrum been allocated for the rollout of broadband services under technology and services neutral conditions in order to achieve EU's targets in terms of coverage and speed?**  
Regarding already allocated spectrum, should a minimum amount of spectrum be actually assigned by a specific date?
- 2) Under what conditions should spectrum be assigned to facilitate innovation in equipment and services by small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs)?**
- 3) How and to what extent can the provision of seamless services across borders be supported by a coherent approach in spectrum management?**
- 4) While maintaining a large amount of spectrum for the continued development of high quality pluralist broadcasting, should Europe take further action to ensure the complete transition to low/medium power use of the 790-862 MHz band and the provision of wireless broadband in order to ensure the widest possible coverage for EU citizens and business? Should coverage obligations be attached to these spectrum usage rights?**

As consumers want to use broadband services also via radio networks it is important that radio networks are able to provide data rates comparable to those of the fixed networks. The recent months have shown that due to the market success of 'smart phones' (e.g., the iPhone), mobile broadband data rates are increasing enormously.

Unfortunately WRC-07 did not succeed to allocate a sufficient portion of world-wide harmonised spectrum for the demand of mobile future generations (e.g., 4G, etc.). Only 392 MHz of IMT spectrum were identified for that purpose. This is only 30% of the ITU-R estimated need for additional IMT spectrum for 2020. As it was rejected to address this issue again at WRC-12, the objective shall be to put a corresponding agenda item on the agenda for the WRC-16.

Moreover, ETNO supports the harmonisation of spectrum usage and appreciates the efforts made to improve the flexibility of this usage by moving towards technology neutrality. The opening of the 900 MHz band to new technologies and further work concerning 1800 MHz band are very satisfactory in that respect. However, new methods and conditions included in the licences to provide interference immunity might be checked and ascertained before extending their use. In particular, the regulation of the usage of 800 MHz band by ECN according to "block edge masks" is addressing only part of the problem which solution appears to be costly and time consuming.

ETNO supports the harmonisation of usage and regulation of the 790-862 MHz band all over Europe for medium and low power bi-directional communications networks and therefore welcomes all the initiatives taken by the European Commission to foster such harmonisation process.

However, ETNO believes that further actions should be developed in order to accelerate the spectrum availability all over Europe. For example the 800 MHz band, considered as an essential band for enhancing the wireless broadband coverage in rural and indoor areas, should be available everywhere. In order to achieve this goal, it would be useful to set a deadline for EU Member States for the designation or making available the 800 MHz band for networks other than high-power broadcasting. Further improvements of the regulatory scenario should be envisaged.

Furthermore allocation of additional spectrum for ECN below 790 MHz should be considered in order to take into account diverse national situations and allow the use of 20 MHz carriers in this band.

ETNO is also of the opinion that a coordinated approach is the best one, as already proven in the 900 MHz band where the 'GSM Directive' has allowed the deployment of seamless services all over Europe. The recent revision of that Directive is the perfect follow up of such kind of approach.

## **Social inclusion, Services for citizens**

- 5) How can the EU ensure that broadband services effectively contribute to bridging the digital divide, for example by reaching previously underserved areas and segments of the population? How do wired, terrestrial wireless and satellite systems best contribute to this aim?**
- 6) How can the EU ensure that European citizens get advanced, easy and affordable access to a wide choice of high-quality broadcasting content taking into account innovative technologies and platforms as well as incentives for investment? How do the various types of wired, terrestrial wireless and satellite systems and networks best contribute to this aim?**

**7) How can public users of spectrum in Europe (e.g. agencies or administrations active in safety or security activities) switch to more spectrum efficient technologies and access the appropriate amount of spectrum required for reaching their public service objectives?**

ETNO agrees that benefits of the ECNS development are not only of economic but also of social nature. On this specific issue, the EU would ensure that such services can be offered everywhere, easing the network deployment. In line with the work already done by the RSPG, appropriate incentives should be provided to public users to implement spectrum efficiency of the technologies they use.

The European Commission should continue to complete the framework for a harmonised use of the digital dividend in the EU and should take all necessary steps to convince those Member States which are still hesitating to open the 'digital dividend' for mobile broadband services.

Finally, there will be additional spectrum needs in Europe to further promote the development of mobile broadband and to stimulate competition between wireline and wireless providers.

### **Space exploration, transport safety**

**11) Is there a need to increase the protection afforded to spectrum used for space exploration against interference by terrestrial activities? Should a coherent plan be developed at EU level to coordinate efforts for the protection of spectrum used for the promotion of space exploration?**

**12) What are the requirements and priorities to make spectrum available for a modernised air traffic control system in Europe and beyond?**

Related to the requirements and priorities while making spectrum available for modernised air traffic control system around 1 GHz, it is important that no additional nor more stringent requirements are set to the GSM900/UMTS900 systems below 960 MHz. GSM900 systems are widely used and vital all-over Europe, all the frequencies are in use and the deployment of UMTS900 carries additional challenges in the spectrum planning.

### **Effective coordination at international level and negotiations with third countries**

**13) How can EU policy priorities best be defended throughout the negotiations at WRCs to guarantee effective solutions, and how is the EU position to be expressed to EU negotiating partners?**

**14) How could the EU contribute and support Member States in improving coordination of the use of the digital dividend and other important spectrum bands with non EU neighbouring countries?**

ETNO believes that the current organisation of the European preparation of WRCs is working well, under the lead of CEPT developing European Common Proposals and coordinating the country members during the conference. The work and importance of CEPT is well recognized within ITU where the coordination of regional organisations is decisive. The EU should continue to provide guidance in accordance with its strategy on specific relevant issues. The EU position should be fostered through bilateral preparation meetings with neighbouring non-EU countries and other regional organisations. EU and CEPT should also give more emphasis on WRC decisions which facilitate coordination at EU borders.

## **Refarm ing and competition**

- 15) What measures, in particular regarding assignment of spectrum, could be needed at EU level to ensure that spectrum refarming best promotes service and technology innovation and progress?**
- 16) Are measures necessary at EU level to ensure that competition between operators in the downstream service markets is not affected by spectrum refarming?**
- 17) In order to improve flexibility in spectrum use and to stimulate competition, what steps should be taken to introduce spectrum trading in specific frequency bands? Is there a need for other harmonised assignment conditions? In order to avoid anticompetitive behaviour, what steps should be taken to prevent spectrum hoarding?**

Harmonisation of frequency bands usage on a global scale brought decisive benefits to consumers and is the base for the wireless and mobile industry success. ETNO believes that any refarming process should continue to be preceded by a detailed and sound technical, regulatory and commercial analysis.

Furthermore, due to the potential distortion of competition, new spectrum management mechanisms should enter into force only after technical and operational feasibility assessment carried out by competent bodies, including CEPT. ETNO also believes that the transition is complex and that in each country a balance must be found between the legitimate interests of existing license holders with the introduction of new market mechanisms.