

Wider Spectrum Letter to Commissioners' Cabinets

Press coverage

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News

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In an open letter to EC president Jean-Claude Juncker, the group called on the EC “to consider the impact of frequency allocation on European jobs and growth” and “the possible consequences for the media, creative and cultural sector, now recognised as one of Europe’s top three sectors by growth and employment”.

In the letter, the group said it hoped for a consensual outcome to spectrum allocation and said there is a strong case for co-existence between terrestrial broadcasting and mobile broadband services.

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In the letter, the group said it hoped for a consensual outcome to spectrum allocation and said there is a strong case for co-existence between terrestrial broadcasting and mobile broadband services.

It expressed surprised that the EC’s reported draft communication on the Digital Single Market appears to incorporate “so few traces” of the Lamy report on the future of the UHF band, which made a strong case for the continued relevance of DTT. The group said that the draft communication “appears not to make the connection between spectrum allocation and local creative and cultural jobs, media pluralism and diversity”.

In an annex to its letter, the Wider Spectrum Group said that moving away from DTT would result in a loss of €38.5 billion to the European economy even before any impact on the EU’s creative industries was taken into consideration.

<http://www.digitaltveurope.net/360932/broadcasters-slam-few-traces-of-lamy-in-digital-single-market-proposal/>

Agence Europe

DIGITAL: Radio broadcasters question Commission over spectrum

5 May 2015

Bulletin Quotidien Europe

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Brussels, 04/05/2015 (Agence Europe) - The member associations of the Wider Spectrum Group defend the interests of workers and employees in the audio-visual and radio sector (UER, AER, APWPT, Broadcast Networks Europe, EBU, European Federation of Journalists and the UNI). On Wednesday 29 April, they drafted a letter to the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, Vice President Andrus Ansip and Commissioner Günther Oettinger, responsible for digital issues. They call for the crucial importance of spectrum radio to be acknowledged for both terrestrial radio broadcasting and mobile cordless communications. The Wider Spectrum Group regrets the lack of attention paid to



the recommendations in the Lamy Report in the draft of the “digital single market” strategy to be presented on 6 May. It also calls on the Commission to introduce plans for a stable long-term legal framework so that a sufficient spectrum portion is reserved for terrestrial digital television. It should also be pointed out that radio broadcasters are concerned that the use of the 700 MHz frequency, hitherto exclusively used by hertz radio broadcasters, cordless microphones and mobile cordless communications create damaging interference to terrestrial digital television. The Wider Spectrum Group recently expressed its concerns in this connection as part of the public consultation on the Lamy report (see EUROPE 11294). (Isabelle Lamberty)

NUMÉRIQUE: spectre radio, les radiodiffuseurs interpellent la Commission

5 May 2015

Bulletin Quotidien Europe

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Bruxelles, 04/05/2015 (Agence Europe) - Les associations membres du « Wider Spectrum Group », qui défend les intérêts des travailleurs et employés du secteur audiovisuel et radio (UER, AER, APWPT, Broadcast networks Europe, EBU, Fédération européenne des journalistes, UNI), ont écrit, mercredi 29 avril, une lettre au président de la Commission européenne, Jean-Claude Juncker, au vice-président Andrus Ansip et au commissaire Günther Oettinger, chargés des Questions numériques, appelant à une reconnaissance de l'importance cruciale du spectre radio autant pour la radiodiffusion terrestre que pour les communications mobiles et sans fil.

Regrettant un manque d'attention accordée aux recommandations du rapport Lamy dans le projet de communication relatif à la stratégie sur le « marché unique numérique », qui sera présentée le 6 mai, le « Wider Spectrum Group » appelle la Commission à prévoir un cadre juridique stable à long terme pour qu'une portion suffisante du spectre soit réservée à la télévision numérique terrestre. Pour rappel, les radiodiffuseurs craignent que l'utilisation de la bande de 700 MHz, jusqu'ici exploitée uniquement par les réseaux de radiodiffusion hertzienne et les microphones sans fil, par les communications mobiles et sans fil, ne crée des interférences nuisibles à la télévision numérique terrestre. Le « Wider Spectrum Group » avait déjà exprimé ses craintes récemment, dans le cadre de la consultation publique sur le rapport Lamy (EUROPE 11294). (Isabelle Lamberty)

Broadband TV News

BNE fears Lamy will be ignored

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Pascal Lamy's findings on digital terrestrial television.

The letter from Broadcast Network Europe (BNE), under the banner of the Wider Spectrum Group, calls for recognition in the upcoming Digital Single Market communication of the role spectrum plays for Terrestrial Broadcasting alongside wireless and mobile broadband.

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China's Impact on Global Trade and Growth: Pascal Lamy Broadcast executives have written to Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission, accusing Europe of ignoring Pascal Lamy's findings on digital terrestrial television.

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"Broadcast Networks Europe (BNE) members invest in state of the art digital infrastructures for Europe. Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) is the leading platform for TV distribution in Europe and plays a key role in the European audiovisual ecosystem, a major jobs contributing sector. It is time to take into account those dimensions in the Digital Single Market strategy, building on the Lamy Report conclusions," said Lars Backlund, Secretary General for BNE.



Fears that the Commission was leaning heavily towards the telecoms sector followed a reported draft communication on the Digital Single Market showing little reference to Lamy's work.

The High Level Group chaired by former European Commissioner and WTO Director General Pascal Lamy looked at future use of the UHF spectrum band between 470 to 790MHz. It said: "the EU should adopt a common position against the co-primary allocation of the core audiovisual band (470-694MHz) to the mobile service at WRC 2015".

Policy Tracker

European Commission unveils digital single market strategy

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European Commission unveils digital single market strategy

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May 06, 2015
by [Toby Youell](#)

The two European commissioners who deal with spectrum have talked up the prospects for their proposals at the launch of Europe's "digital single market" strategy, despite the fact that similar initiatives have been consistently rejected by EU member states in the Council of Ministers.

Both Günther Oettinger (commissioner for the digital economy and society) and Andrus Ansip, (vice president of the Commission for the digital single market) have confidently stated that the member states can be persuaded to coordinate on spectrum policy.

"Spectrum is very much on the agenda and we will not abandon our interest," said Oettinger. "I'm sure that during our mandate – the earlier the better – there will be spectrum coordination".

Ansip echoed this view. "It's easy to say it's a question of sovereignty and subsidiarity, but we all know that deeper cooperation in this field is needed; we cannot go on without this cooperation in the field of spectrum and I'm sure member states understand this," he said. The Commission does not want to get its hands on member states' auction revenue; it only wants to enable Europe to return to the "glory days" of GSM, he added.

“The strategy confirms the European Commission's intention for member states to retain the revenues from spectrum auctions”

Oettinger also highlighted the need to coordinate spectrum when it comes to enabling 5G, the Internet of Things and connected cars.

Digital single market strategy

The Commissioners' comments came as they presented the European Commission's eagerly anticipated digital single market (DSM) [strategy](#).

Although the strategy's wording differed from the leaked draft reports, the substance was largely identical – reflecting the recent remarks made by DG Connect deputy director Roberto Viola at a [conference](#) in London.



— filed under: Jun15, Mobile, Digital dividend, Spectrum policy, Broadcasting

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Digital single market strategy

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Although the strategy's wording differed from the leaked draft reports, the substance was largely identical – reflecting the recent remarks made by DG Connect deputy director Roberto Viola at a conference in London.

Specifically, the Commission promises to present proposals in 2016 "for an ambitious overhaul of the telecoms regulatory framework" that will focus on "a consistent single market approach to spectrum policy and management". The strategy indicates that this will include an enhancement of the Radio Spectrum Policy Group (RSPG) or the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC).



Commission officials insist that this is not a question of transferring competencies away from member states but about making these intergovernmental groups work more effectively.

The strategy explains that “a more harmonised framework” will reduce barriers to entry, promote competition, and make the industry for predictable for investors. It laments the inconsistent assignment of the 800 MHz band as evidence of the current institutional framework’s inadequacy.

The strategy reveals that in the near future, “the Commission will make specific proposals regarding the coordination of the 700 MHz band”. According to Commission officials, this coordination will be limited to the timing of assignments rather than licensing conditions.

In an ideal world, the Commission would also be able to coordinate the licensing conditions but because a timely refarming of the 700 MHz is considered urgent, Brussels is limiting its proposals to the coordination of timing so that any measure can be agreed before the other proposals go through the regulatory process.

The strategy considers the adoption of the “connected continent” regulation initiated by former Commission vice president Neelie Kroes as essential. That regulation originally sought to coordinate spectrum assignments on a pan-European basis but was later stripped down by the Council to only focus on net neutrality and roaming.

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The role of spectrum in the strategy

This vision for spectrum management falls under the “creating the right conditions for digital networks and services to flourish” pillar of the strategy.

This "pillar" also includes tackling regulatory fragmentation to enable the exploitation of economies of scale; making the regulatory institutional framework more effective; reforming the Universal Service Directive to incentivise investment; and ensuring a level playing field for market players. The other two pillars are “better access for consumers and business to online goods and services across Europe” and “maximising the growth potential of the European Digital Economy”.

In general, the European Commission has been given political cover to be ambitious on the DSM since Jean-Claude Juncker became its president after European elections last year. One of his five political objectives was “a connected Digital Single Market”, which included the “need to have the courage to break down national silos in telecoms regulation... [and] in the management of radio waves”.



One interesting aspect of the strategy is the promise to perform a “comprehensive analysis of the role of platforms in the market including illegal content on the Internet” later this year. PolicyTracker understands that this follows pressure from France and Germany to address the market dominance of Google, which is already the subject of several EU-level regulatory and legal interventions.

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Edits to accommodate broadcasting industry

Previous drafts of the strategy mentioned the urgent need to reform the 700 MHz band, but the final version was edited to say this should also “accommodate the specific needs of audiovisual media distribution”.

In a statement, the “Wider Spectrum Group”, which represents the broadcasting industry, said that its needs “require more than just ‘accommodating’”.

A week before the strategy was published, the group sent an open letter to Juncker in which it expressed “surprise” that the DSM strategy did not recognise the needs of the broadcasting industry.

“We are surprised that the Commission’s reported draft communication on the Digital Single Market bears so few traces of the work of Pascal Lamy and appears not to make the connection between spectrum allocation and local creative and cultural jobs, media pluralism and diversity,” it said.

The letter also explained the social, cultural and economic contribution made to Europe by the broadcasting sector, and the fact that spectrum is indispensable for “Europe’s audiovisual model”. The letter reveals that the industry was pleased with Pascal Lamy’s “balanced” proposals to reform the 700 MHz band but retain the rest of the UHF band for terrestrial broadcasting until at least 2030. Broadcasters expressed a desire for these objectives to be acknowledged within the strategy.

They argued that long-term legal certainty on spectrum availability for broadcasting is required, and the strategy should reflect this.

The European Broadcasting Union welcomed the launch of the strategy, also arguing that it should be linked to the Lamy report.

Other reaction

The Strategy has been broadly welcomed by the telecoms industry. The European Competitive Telecommunications Association (ECTA), for example, congratulated the Commission for its “robust political vision” that favoured the role of competition in telecoms.



The European Telecommunication Network Operators' association (ETNO) also welcomed the strategy. It called for the swift removal of barriers to investment and the coordinated release of the 700 MHz band.

"Investment in mobile networks should be facilitated by a coherent regulatory landscape, which allows access to all the spectrum needed, appropriate returns and timely deployment," it said. "To this end, we also encourage strategic proposals regarding the coordinated release of the 700 MHz band for wireless broadband services."

The GSM Association said Europe needs the timely and coordinated release of more spectrum for mobile broadband.

The Chair of the European Parliament's inter-group on the "digital agenda", Michal Boni, said the strategy would enable economic growth and better services for digital consumers. •