The Electronic Communications Committee (ECC) met in Skopje, Macedonia (FYROM) 26th -30th October.

A major series of CEPT Reports was approved for the European Commission covering the Digital Dividend, complemented by an ECC Decision on mobile services in DIgital Divided spectrum. A CEPT Report was approved on UWB, and ECC Decisions were approved on personal tracking terminals for one-way communications to satellites, and also on extending to SMS services the Harmonised Short Codes for services of social value ('116' numbers)

ECC paves the way for universal broadband across Europe

The ECC has approved a significant set of reports which enable the benefits of the digital dividend spectrum (frequencies freed up from the switch from analogue to digital television) to be fully realised in Europe. The work on the 790-862 MHz band underpins an ECC Decision which was also agreed this week, which can be applied by all CEPT Countries.

The ECC's detailed studies define the technical basis for how the digital dividend spectrum should be managed across Europe to gain the most flexible and effective use of the frequencies. The reports enable the co-ordinated use of the frequencies at a European level to pave the way for a wide variety of technologies to be introduced within this prime range of spectrum. This includes:

- high capacity wireless broadband to rural areas across Europe
- mobile communications such as voice and data
- mobile video and multimedia

In order to make way for new and innovative services, the ECC is using an advanced model for spectrum management. By easing technical restrictions and applying a minimum set of technical conditions, the ECC has succeeded in reducing wasteful inefficiencies which could arise within the digital dividend frequency band. This approach protects existing broadcasting services and new emerging technologies across Europe from interference and provides a unique opportunity for new services to launch.

The detailed studies published after the meeitng are:

- the common and least restrictive technical conditions for using the 790–862 MHz frequency band for mobile and other services
- a channelling plan for mobile services in the 790–862 MHz band
- guidelines for coordinating (permitting use while controlling interference) between broadcasting in one country, and mobile services in another
- technical information on how mobile services may interfere with digital terrestrial television receivers (DVB-T)

Commenting on these new initiatives, Thomas Ewers, the ECC Chairman, said:

> "The key aim of this work has been to develop the best technical basis for using the digital dividend spectrum to gain the maximum benefit for society and industry. We've achieved that aim by using the best modern spectrum management practice across Europe to make it fit for the digital age."

The European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administrations (CEPT) was tasked with carrying out this work under a mandate from the European Commission. This has been undertaken by the ECC as the principal Committee of the CEPT responsible for radio spectrum and telephone numbering matters.

The ECC Decision and the reports will be available from early November on the ECC Documentation Database on this website.

Next steps

These reports are now being submitted to the European Commission, which is expected to take them to its Radio Spectrum Committee in December for further consideration. Earlier this week the Commission signalled its intention to develop a Comission Decision on the use of the 790-862 MHz band, which will use these deliverables as a technical basis. The work on mobile services in the 790-862 MHz band underpins an ECC Decision which was also agreed this week, which can be applied by all CEPT Countries

Ultra Wideband (UWB)

The ECC also finalised work on Ultra Wideband (UWB) devices, under mandate for the European Commission. This complements its own decision on some specific UWB applications at its June 2009 meeting. The technology is used in these applications to see inside solid objects, e.g. hidden objects in walls, and tends to be used in building renovation and crime investigation.

However, a new set of devices (Object Discrimination, or ODC) has emerged using this technology which detects objects in hazardous locations, such as a hand going too close to a drill or a saw in a workshop. Users of this device include skilled workers, experts, art historians, architects, planners, environmentalists, civil engineers as well as craftspeople.

The ECC has defined a set of technical limits and use conditions for these new devices to ensure they do not cause interference to other services which use the same frequencies. These safeguards enable the introduction of this important technology across Europe thereby improving the safety at work of many thousands of people.

The new CEPT Report also sets out the ECC's preferred approach on how to treat new proposals for use of UWB devices for new types pf application. It emphasises adopting, as far as possible, a generic rather than an application-specific approach to this spectrum-efficient technology.

Satellite Personal Tracker ("SPOT") Terminals.

In addition, the ECC has agreed its Decision which loosens regulation of the use of Satellite Personal Tracker (SPOT) Terminals. This technology is used to track goods, and by people in emergency situations in remote areas.

The ECC's decision applies to personal (handheld) mobile radios which communicate independently and directly to satellites without the usual two-way communications, where the satellite controls the terminal.

Users of these devices will no longer have to apply for an individual licence to use them in those CEPT Countries which implement the Decision, making them easier to obtain and use.

SMS short codes

Europe enjoys a successful system of harmonised short codes for telephone calls (e.g. the number 112 summons the emergency services in all CEPT countries). The Code number 116 was introduced recently for services of social value (one of the first examples was nmber 116000 for a "missing children hotline"); These new six digit "116xxx" numbers have been introduced so that people can call helplines using

the same memorable number for the equivalent services regardless of which relevant country they are in.

The new ECC Decision approved this week extends that harmonisation also to texting (SMS) services. The same short number starting with digits 116 as allocated to a harmonised voice service may be used by the same number holder of the existing voice 116-number, if he is willing to use it for the same service utilising SMS.

Ends.

Contact

Digital Dividend:

Mobile Services' channelling:
Alexander Gulyaev. Gulyaev@ero.dk

Least restrictive technical conditions:
Jean-Philippe Kermoal: Kermoal@ero.dk

Cross Border Coordination and DVB-T interference:
Marc Le Devendec LeDevendec@ero.dk

UWB ODC:
Marc Le Devendec/ Fatih Yurdal Yurdal@ero.dk

'**SPOT' terminals**: Fatih Yurdal

Short Codes: Jukka Rakkolainen Rakkolainen@ero.dk