

Lamy report response

10 September 2014

European Public Safety community gives cautious welcome to report on the future use of the UHF band in Europe

10 September 2014 - The European public protection and disaster relief (PPDR) community has given a cautious welcome to the recommendations in the High Level Group (HLG) report made to the European Commission on the future use of the 470-790 MHz UHF band.

The PPDR community concurs with the report's finding that the reallocation of the 700 MHz band for mobile services throughout the EU is the desirable way forward. This will ensure capacity for mobile broadband services in the light of steadily rising demand, while serving Europe's broadband coverage targets and delivering the benefits of global economies of scale. These mobile services include the PPDR broadband services that are critical to ensuring the safety of the public.

Although PPDR services are not referenced anywhere in the report, the requirements of the European PPDR community have been clearly stated elsewhere, including through the EU Council's Law Enforcement Working Party (LEWP), working jointly with the spectrum regulator community (CEPT-ECC). The conclusion, in ECC Report 199, is that a minimum of 2 x 10 MHz spectrum is required for critical mobile broadband data services.

The harmonisation of frequency spectrum for PPDR is a declared policy objective of the European Union and the only place where that will be possible the next 20 years is within the 700 MHz band. The vast majority of government officials dealing with public safety matters in the EU see use of the 700MHz band as the best way to achieve this. The LEWP position paper, from the LEWP Greece presidency, clearly indicates the unanimously agreed preference by all member states for the 700MHz band.

HLG chairman Pascal Lamy states in his report: *"I believe there is already one lesson learned on the future use of the 700 MHz band in Europe – this process has been influenced by developments outside Europe, namely the emergence of a globally significant band plan from stakeholders in the Asia-Pacific region as well as a concerted effort of some African and Middle Eastern states at WRC-12 to obtain the co-primary allocation of this band to the mobile service in the whole ITU Region 1. It can hardly be imagined that Europe would agree on an alternative*

long-term option for the 700 MHz band, which would be more beneficial for its digital economy and society, other than adopting mobile usage in line with the aforementioned band plan.”

Asia-Pacific, the Middle East and the US have already allocated dedicated spectrum for PPDR at 700 MHz. A united community within the field of public safety and emergency services is key to ensuring the future safety of frontline officers. This can only be done by allocating spectrum for PPDR in Europe within the 700 MHz band.

The business case for PPDR spectrum is strong. London School of Economics analysis of the use of mission critical broadband by emergency services has estimated a substantially better socioeconomic benefit for this purpose than if the 2x10MHz in the 700MHz band are auctioned for commercial use. The socioeconomic benefit is estimated to be more than €20 billion p.a., relating to 60 per cent of the European population across 10 selected countries representing three regions. This figure is higher if it is extrapolated to cover the EU28 figure of 500 million people, yielding a socioeconomic benefit of €34.94 billion p.a. This analysis and other supporting information can be found here:

<http://www.tandcca.com/assoc/page/13043>

Notes to Editors:

The High Level Group (HLG) on the future use of the UHF band (470-790 MHz) was convened at the end of 2013 by the Vice President of the European Commission and Commissioner for the Digital Agenda Neelie Kroes. It comprised 19 executive-level representatives from the mobile and broadcasting sectors, including the PMSE sector, under the chairmanship of Pascal Lamy. The overarching objective laid down in the mandate of the Group was to deliver strategic advice to the Commission for the development of a European strategy on the future use of the UHF band. The report can be found here:

<http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/news/report-results-work-high-level-group-future-use-uhf-band>

Supporting quotes:

TCCA Chairman Phil Godfrey said:

“Available and harmonised UHF frequencies for the emergency services across Europe is a prerequisite for the effective functioning of this vital sector, not only nationally but also cross-borders. Disasters, man-made or natural, do not confine themselves to convenient geographic regions.”

The TCCA represents TETRA, the most successful mission critical communications voice and narrowband data mobile standard in the world. For critical broadband data communications, the TCCA’s Critical Communications Broadband Group (CCBG) is driving the development of common global mobile standards and solutions for all users who operate in a mission critical or business critical environment. For more information please visit www.tandcca.com

Contact: editor@tandcca.com

Tel: + 44 (0) 77 66 33 32 77

PSC-Europe President Harold Linke said:

“Secured and reliable communication is the most important tool that emergency services need when they are on mission serving the European citizens. In the PSCE Forum PPDR users for several years express their need for European wide harmonised UHF frequencies to allow a better cooperation between the services of all EU Member States. The 700 MHz band under discussion will be the only chance (in the next 20 years) - for a whole generation - to accomplish this. We should not forget that all European Citizens count on the effectiveness of their emergency services when the next disaster strikes.”

Public Safety Communication Europe Forum (PSCE) is a permanent autonomous organisation aimed at improving the provision of public safety communications and information management systems and the safety of the citizens during crisis and emergency situations. PSCE provides a unique common platform for researchers, industry and users enabling regular exchange of ideas, information, experiences and best practices. For more information, please visit www.psc-europe.eu

Email: secretariat@psc-europe.eu

Tel: + 32 (0) 2 738 07 63

FEU President Dieter Nuessler said:

“Sadly enough we have always experienced that in major disasters – whether man made or natural ones – the lack of appropriate communication means and incomplete interoperability between PPDR has resulted in less efficient response than expected by the public.

“Official reactions from stakeholders outside the PPDR community are always the same: “ If we had known that you would need that, we would have given you the resources you want. In the light of that event we will reconsider” After a while all this was always forgotten – but came up again after the next disaster / hurricane / flooding / earthquake / terrorist attack.....

“Without state-of-the-art mission critical communications we will not meet the challenges of future major disastrous events. The population will have to pay the toll if government policy neglects the needs of those organisations dedicated to helping people in distress.”

FEU (Federation of the European Union Fire Officer Associations) is a non-for-profit organisation, currently comprising 22 members of 21 EU-countries and Norway. Delegates are professional fire chiefs. The principal aim of FEU is to enhance fire safety and provide expertise to European bodies in matters concerning the development of fire brigades and fire safety in Europe. For more information please visit www.f-e-u.org

BAPCO President Sue Lampard said:

“The PPDR community is arguably already at the point where data (as well as voice) is deemed ‘mission critical’. This requirement will only grow over the next few years, and additional spectrum will be needed to support that growth.

“The 700MHz bandwidth is ideal for PPDR needs in terms of coverage over large areas and in-buildings. Release of 2 X 10 MHz will provide additional capacity required. Additionally, the opportunity for harmonization to allow cross-border interoperability should not be missed.”

British APCO provides a forum for professionals in the field of public safety and civil contingencies communications and information technology to exchange information, ideas and experiences. British APCO is affiliated to the APCO Global Alliance which includes similar organisations representing public safety users in the USA, Canada and Australasia. For further information please visit www.bapco.org.uk

EENA Deputy Executive Director Tony O'Brien said:

"The arguments for allocating dedicated spectrum to the PPDR community are compelling and now is the time to make the necessary policy decision. The PPDR community and the citizens they serve need to have the

necessary infrastructural tools to react more effectively and efficiently. This is an opportunity we cannot afford to miss."

EENA, the European Emergency Number Association, is dedicated to promoting high-quality emergency services reached by the number 112 throughout the EU. EENA serves as a discussion platform for emergency services, public authorities, decision makers, researchers, associations and solution providers with a view to improving the emergency response in accordance with citizens' requirements. EENA is also promoting the establishment of an efficient system for alerting citizens about imminent or developing emergencies. For more information please visit www.eena.org