



EU radio spectrum policy for wireless connections across borders

Enabling seamless wireless connections across borders so we can share media, stay informed and enjoy the latest innovative technologies wherever we are takes coordination and cooperation on radio spectrum. This dynamic and rapidly evolving sector needs a flexible, market-sensitive approach.



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All citizens should be able to stay connected and use innovative services, such as those enabled by 5G, across the EU. Radio spectrum usage has a key role in delivering these services. EU radio spectrum policy aims to coordinate national spectrum management approaches to support the single market for wireless products and services and enable innovation.

Electronic communications in the EU

The 2018 European Electronic Communications Code updates the rules for radio spectrum management across the EU. The Code calls for creating a stable and harmonised regulatory environment, improving the coordination of spectrum and facilitating innovation, particularly through 5G networks. In particular, the Code:

- calls for long licence durations, coupled with clear rules on license renewals and more stringent requirements to use spectrum effectively and efficiently
- defines strict deadlines for the use of pioneer spectrum bands for 5G as well as for spectrum harmonised for wireless broadband networks and services;
- seeks to ensure better coordination of spectrum policies and assignment conditions across the EU, with a peer review mechanism

- facilitates the deployment of 5G networks
- provides more means for national authorities to support competition
- creates an improved spectrum coordination mechanism

Defining radio spectrum policy

The Radio Spectrum Policy Programme, or the RSPP, established in 2012, defines key policy objectives and general principles for managing radio spectrum efficiently. The programme promotes investments, competition and innovation across the EU, while protecting general interest objectives such as cultural diversity and media pluralism. It requires Member States, in cooperation with the Commission, to foster the collective and shared use of spectrum where appropriate. The programme ensures harmonised spectrum use for electronic communications, research, technological development, space, transport, energy and audiovisual sectors across the EU. It also establishes an EU inventory of existing uses of spectrum, for both commercial and public purposes. The programme aims to enhance the efficiency and flexibility of spectrum use, as well as preserving and promoting competition.

Harmonising technical conditions for EU-wide interoperability

The European Electronic Communications Code sets the general principles of radio spectrum management. Member States must promote the harmonisation of spectrum and ensure it is used effectively and efficiently. In this context, cross-border coordination of the use of radio spectrum among Member States is a key element of the effective management of radio spectrum and is essential for the proper functioning of the internal market.

The 2002 Radio Spectrum Decision allows the Commission to adopt implementing decision to harmonise technical conditions with regard to the availability and efficient use of spectrum for the proper functioning of the single market. The Commission may issue mandates to the European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administrations (CEPT) for the preparation of such technical implementing measures.

The European Commission and national spectrum regulators work closely together to develop common rules. To assist the Commission, two complementary bodies were set up to facilitate consultation and to develop and support an EU Radio Spectrum Policy:

- The Radio Spectrum Policy Group (RSPG) is a group of high-level national governmental experts to help the Commission developing general Radio Spectrum Policy at EU level.
- The Radio Spectrum Committee (RSC) assists the Commission in developing technical implementation measures to ensure harmonised conditions across Europe for the availability and efficient use of radio spectrum.

International negotiations

The coordination of spectrum management at the global level is the responsibility of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). The ITU regularly updates the allocation of spectrum to reflect technological innovation and change of use by amending the Radio Regulations Treaty. Such amendments are negotiated by the ITU's 193 member countries at World Radiocommunication Conferences (WRCs). EU Member States adopt common positions for WRCs in the form of Council Decisions. Such Council decisions complement the European Common Positions adopted by 48

European countries (including all EU Member States) in the ITU's Regional Telecommunications Organisation for Europe, the CEPT.

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EVENT | 06 October 2022

Workshop - Study on assessing the efficiency of radio spectrum award processes in the Member States, including the effects of applying the European Electronic Communications Code

The workshop will discuss the findings of the study, which aims to provide research and analysis results relating to how the (divergent) conditions attached to rights of use during radio spectrum awards processes in the Member States have

affected the roll out of 5G networks.

EVENT | 30 March 2022

Workshop on the Use of the Sub-700 MHz Band

DG Connect would like to invite you to the workshop on the use of the sub-700 MHz band that is a part of the study that has been recently commissioned.

POLICY AND LEGISLATION | 10 February 2022

Financing of Electronic Communications actions and the adoption of the work programme for 2022

This is the text of the Commission decision of 9 February 2022 on the financing of Electronic Communications actions and the adoption of the work programme for 2022. It also contains an annex describing the actions to be financed and the budget breakdown for 2022.

PRESS RELEASE | 09 February 2022

Harmonising spectrum for enhanced connectivity: ready for 5G and innovation

The Commission has adopted implementing decisions to ensure that the EU's radio spectrum policy meets the growing demand for broadband and for innovative digital applications.

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Big Picture

Radio spectrum: the basis of wireless communications

Wireless communications, via public or private networks, use radio spectrum, i.e. a range of radio waves, to carry information. Such communication can be between people, people and machines or systems (“things” more general) or between things. In this context, radio spectrum is...

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Uses of Radio Spectrum

The Commission sets out ambitious connectivity objectives to achieve through widespread deployment and takeup of very high capacity networks, including wireless networks such as 5G, Wifi and satellite.

Promoting the shared use of Europe's radio spectrum

The EU wants to promote the shared use of radio spectrum to ensure it is used efficiently, and demand is met across the EU.

Use of Radio Spectrum by the public sector

Public sector bodies use radio spectrum in a range of fields to improve public life. EU policies help to coordinate these efforts across borders.

Easier access to radio spectrum: the EU's electronic communications framework

Ensuring easier access to radio spectrum will ensure the EU meets its connectivity targets for the Digital Decade.

The Radio Spectrum Committee

The Radio Spectrum Committee (RSC) is responsible for specific technical measures required to implement the broader Radio Spectrum Policy.

The Radio spectrum policy group

The Radio Spectrum Policy Group is a high-level advisory group assisting the Commission in the development of radio spectrum policy.

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