



EU radio spectrum policy for wireless connections across borders

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 \(https://www.itu.int/pub/R-REG\)](https://www.itu.int/pub/R-REG) Treaty. Such amendments are negotiated by the ITU's 193 member countries at [World Radiocommunication Conferences \(https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-R/conferences/wrc/Pages/default.aspx\)](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-R/conferences/wrc/Pages/default.aspx) (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 \(https://www.cept.org/ecc/\)](https://www.cept.org/ecc/).

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