



“Broadcasting and PMSE need preservation of the current rules (no change) regarding the allocation of the UHF band”

Brussels, 8 November 2022 - European growth, innovation, inclusiveness and sustainable employment in audiovisual, radio, live performances, programme-making and special events sectors depend, as an essential input, on the access to radio spectrum frequencies, and more specifically to the 470-694 MHz band.

Rules concerning spectrum use are shaped internationally, through International Telecommunication Union (ITU)’s World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC), and will be discussed next year at the WRC-23. In this framework, the EU will soon form its position for WRC-23, including on the future use of the 470-694 MHz band, which will be defended by the EU Member States during the WRC.

For the Wider Spectrum Group, the EU needs to support the long-term allocation of the sub-700 MHz band to terrestrial broadcasting and PMSE and oppose a co-primary decision.

This event is part of a series of national and international initiatives happening between 7 and 11 November 2022 in Europe under the banner [Call to Europe week](#).

With this event, the Wider Spectrum Group aims to create a platform for discussion about the EU’s objectives for WRC-23, industry’s suggestions for the content of the EU position for WRC-23 and the impact of the decisions taken by WRC-23 on the EU audiovisual, radio, live performance and content creation sectors – and ultimately on EU citizens, as essential components of healthy and well-functioning democracies.

Frequencies matter

The creative and cultural sector, acknowledged as a leading employer and value driver in Europe¹, deserves a strong industrial strategy that reinforces the pillars it rests on. Spectrum allocation is one of those pillars. Free-to-air universally available radio and TV, live performance and PMSE make available to the public local, diverse and plural European works and information.

Regarding the 470-694 MHz band which is the core spectrum used by the Content and Cultural Industry, access to that band is vital for upholding European values and fostering the cultural and creative sector growth and jobs.

It is because the UHF band matters so much for broadcasting and culture that 10 European and 8 national organisations representing civil society as well as employees and employers joined forces in the [Wider Spectrum Group](#). Together these organisations represent the interests of listeners and viewers, workers and businesses from all across the EU and larger Europe:

- in the field of audio, audiovisual and film creation, production and distribution;
- in radio and TV broadcasting;

¹ In 2021, there were 7.4 million people in cultural employment across the EU according to Eurostat.

- in live performances, programme-making and special events.

Wider Spectrum Group members share a common view on the need to ensure European and national policies regarding spectrum allocation preserve the potential for European growth, innovation, inclusiveness and sustainable employment.

The EU's way towards WRC-23

The EU has adopted, through a recent co-decision by the European Parliament and the Council after proposal by the Commission, a coordinated approach to the allocation of the UHF Band in Europe: the UHF Decision. The Wider Spectrum Group perceives it as a balanced compromise: on the one hand, the EU UHF decision allowed the mobile sector to harmonize the 700 MHz band to the mobile service simultaneously in all Member States; on the other hand, the European Audio-Visual Model is strengthened by the long-term allocation of the Sub-700 MHz band to terrestrial broadcasting and PMSE.

As the EU will form its position for WRC-23, including on the future use of the 470-694 MHz band, the frequencies in the UHF for a creative Europe must be secured in EU spectrum policy and in the ITU process.

The Wider Spectrum Group strongly opposes a co-primary allocation of mobile and broadcasting in the 470-694 MHz band. Moreover, the Wider Spectrum Group considers it as not compatible with the UHF decision, for many reasons detailed in our contributions to spectrum management authorities.

In conclusion

- 1) The balance found in Europe for the allocation of the UHF spectrum is at risk of being disrupted if the remaining spectrum for broadcasting and PMSE is open to mobile sector at the ITU level, with immediate and damaging effect on sectorial investment and innovation, and wide-reaching ramifications for the longer term.
- 2) No UHF spectrum means no terrestrial TV, the most energy-efficient platform, currently serving 80 million EU households and sharing many infrastructures with radio; no live events; much less content creation and associated jobs. This would put at risk direct and universal access to public service and commercial media, free-to-air TV and radio, inclusiveness, pluralism, systemic resiliency.
- 3) We are no longer talking about additional digital dividends – it is about regulation and decisions which may fundamentally change the media distribution, content production and live performance landscape for Europe and the citizens.

The Wider Spectrum Group calls for a firm EU position in favor of "No Change" in the allocation of the UHF band at WRC23.



Wider Spectrum Group
Frequencies for a creative Europe



For more information on the Wider Spectrum Group, its members and common vision, see www.widerspectrum.org or contact secretariat@widerspectrumgroup.org.