



SAP REG Response to the OFCOM Consultation Document

“Award of available spectrum: 10 GHz, 28 GHz, 32 GHz and 40 GHz”

SAP REG, whose members¹ include most major satellite operators and manufacturers serving Europe, is pleased to contribute to OFCOM’s consultation on the proceedings relative to the award of spectrum right licenses in the frequency bands 10 GHz, 28 GHz, 32 GHz and 40 GHz published on 29th June, 2006.

1 – Introduction:

The Spectrum Framework Review published by OFCOM in November 2004 identifies the evolution of the mechanisms contemplated by OFCOM for use in the future to assign frequency rights to spectrum users.

OFCEM has itself observed that “ *The areas where trading and liberalisation cannot be fully applied might be: Spectrum where there are unavoidable, important or valuable international issues. For example, spectrum assigned to satellite operation is generally covered by international obligations and there may be valid economic reasons why the UK would like to see these continue;*” [See p. 22 of Spectrum Framework Review]

We also observe that the vast majority of satellite systems serving the European Union region offer trans-national and pan-European services. We therefore believe that spectrum management approaches are required which would preserve or enhance access to harmonized spectrum on an international basis, including at a European level.

2 – Lack of harmonisation at European level:

The band segmentation in the 28 GHz is provided by ECC Decision (05)01 designating each frequency for either uncoordinated FSS earth station uplinks or FS. The only exception is in the band 28.8365 – 28.9485, designated for uncoordinated FSS, but taking into account that some FS networks were already licensed in some countries at the time the Decision was approved (*decides 2*). In this specific case, new FS links were to be limited to additions on the existing networks (*decides 4*).

¹ SAP REG members include AeroMobile, Alcatel Alenia Space, Connexion by Boeing, Astrium, Europa-Max, Eutelsat, France Telecom, Hispasat, Hughes Network Systems, ICO Global Communications, Inmarsat Ventures PLC, Intelsat, New Skies Satellites N.V., SES Global, Telespazio, Terrestar, Thuraya, Viatis Satellite Radio and WorldSpace

UK has not committed to implementing this Decision, but OFCOM indicate that their proposal “*is in the main consistent with it*”. This is indeed mostly the case, except in the FSS band 28.8365 – 28.9485 GHz, which is shown as paired with the FS band 27.8285 – 27.9405 GHz (Package 1), making it available either for FS or uncoordinated FSS (or for both).

In this specific frequency band, OFCOM has taken a clear position in 2004², when CEPT elaborated ECC/DEC(05)01. Indeed, OFCOM supported satellite in this band on the basis of WRC-03 Decisions and stating that the unpaired FS block could be used for TDD operation.

If these 112 MHz are awarded to FS operations, this will result in a lack of harmonisation at European level, decreasing the economic viability of a pan-European satellite offering.

3 – Specific questions:

Question 1): Do stakeholders agree with the proposals for the award of licences in the 10 GHz, 28 GHz and 32 GHz bands in 2007?

See our position in section 2 above;

Question 3): Do stakeholders agree with the proposals to defer the release of the 40 GHz band and review the position in two years’ time?

We agree.

4 – Conclusions:

We respectfully urge OFCOM to retain this 28.8365 – 28.9485 GHz band for uncoordinated FSS use only to be even more consistent with ECC Decision (05)01.

² See Document FM34(04)12