



Commission for
Communications Regulation

Information Notice

Information Notice on The Regional Radiocommunication Conference (RRC-04)

Geneva, Switzerland.

10 May to 28 May 2004.

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1 Introduction

RRC-04 has just been concluded in Geneva. After 3 weeks of intensive negotiations a framework has been established to develop a frequency plan for the future development of digital terrestrial television broadcasting across 119 countries.

The use of frequencies for terrestrial television broadcasting in Europe has been planned around an agreed frequency assignment plan concluded forty three years ago in Stockholm in 1961. In January 2000, European countries wrote to the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) requesting the ITU to organize a conference to revise the Stockholm Plan of 1961. Their request resulted in an ITU Council decision to convene a Regional Radiocommunication Conference (RRC) for the planning of the digital broadcasting service in the Bands III (174-230 MHz) and IV and V (470- 862 MHz).

The ITU Council decided that RRC-04 would deal with an expanded planning area which included 119 countries from Europe, Africa, Middle East and Iran, as well as the Russian Federation and some of its neighbouring countries. This is the first ITU conference of its kind in fifteen years to deal with the frequency planning of a terrestrial broadcasting service.

The Council decision also directed the conference be held in two sessions — one in 2004 to develop the framework of the plan and the second in 2006 where the new plan will be agreed.

2 The First Session – RRC-04

After three weeks of meetings and negotiations delegates reached agreement on a framework for the establishment of a digital terrestrial broadcasting plan. To this end the resolutions from the first session cover:

- the establishment of appropriate technical parameters in the transition between analogue and digital television;
- the establishing of planning principles, planning methods and planning tools to be used for the intersessional¹ activities and in the second session of the Conference;
- the requirements and procedures to protect existing primary services such as fixed, mobile, aeronautical radionavigation, radio astronomy and broadcasting-satellite where necessary;
- ways to share and ensure equitable access to the spectrum;
- which existing and planned television broadcasting assignments should be taken into consideration.

Ireland's national interests were represented by a small team headed by the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources with members from ComReg, BCI and RTE. The key Irish objectives and European common proposals included requirements for a frequency plan for a fully digital infrastructure, with T-DAB and DVB-T in Band III and DVB-T in Bands IV and V, were successfully met.

¹ Intersessional period – the period between the first and second sessions of the Conference, June 2004 to May 2006.

3 Next Steps

From the end of the first session until the second session in mid 2006, all affected countries will be engaged in the intersessional work carrying out the required planning exercises. This work will be coordinated through an Intersessional Planning Group (IPG) which will work with the Radiocommunication Bureau (BR) to implement advanced planning tools and reach a solution.

A significant amount of energy will also be focused on bilateral negotiations, multilateral negotiations and planning meetings in order to agree coordination before the second session in order to speed up the process and solve difficult coordination problems in advance of the second session of the RRC.

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