



Commission for  
**Communications Regulation**

Information Notice

**Second Information Notice on The World  
Radiocommunication Conference**

**Geneva, Switzerland.**

**9 June to 4 July 2003.**

## 1 Introduction

At 3pm on Friday 4 July 2003 after four weeks of meetings and negotiations, 138 member states of the ITU stepped up to sign the Final Acts of the World Radiocommunication Conference of 2003 (WRC-03). Having reached agreement on international allocations for consumer, commercial and government interests, each Nation represented committed their Countries to abide by the modified Radio Regulations<sup>1</sup>.

During the 4-week period of the WRC-03 from 9 June to the 4 July 2003, a total of 2278 participants had met 962 times in order to consider 1329 documents dealing with 51 agenda items including wireless and mobile communications, satellite broadcasting, scientific research, aircraft communications, marine communications and radiolocation services, just to name a few. The unprecedented level of participation shows the growing importance that radiocommunications plays in the worldwide economy and how critical it is that we harmonise spectrum usage globally and regionally, not only to prevent interference problems but also to achieve economies of scale in the manufacturing sector and to facilitate global use of radiocommunications applications.

This second information notice on the WRC<sup>2</sup> looks at the outcome of the work of the WRC-03 giving an overview of some key of negotiations and agreements reached on the range of issues discussed at the Conference.

ComReg looks forward to implementing the recommendations of WRC-03 and to begin preparations as part of the national preparatory group for the next WRC scheduled to convene in 2007.

Please see the first briefing note (ComReg Doc. 03/66 – ‘Information Notice - The World Radiocommunication Conference Geneva’) for background information on the WRC, the range of issues on the agenda and the areas of radiocommunications affected.

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<sup>1</sup> The Radio Regulations are the international treaty governing the use of the radio-frequency spectrum and the geostationary-satellite and non-geostationary-satellite orbits

<sup>2</sup> See also ComReg Doc. 03/66 – ‘Information Notice - The World Radiocommunication Conference Geneva’

## 2 Results of the World Radiocommunication Conference 2003

Many of the European Common Proposals submitted to the conference, a number of which Ireland supported, were accepted in their entirety with others contributing to compromises leading to delicate agreements.

Some key results of WRC-03 include:

- (i) Expanding the choice available for consumers. The WRC made spectrum allocations and decisions regarding various new satellite and terrestrial wireless services, including RLAN, which allows wireless communication within short-ranges, and broadband-in-flight, which provides high-speed Internet access to airline passengers.

The Conference agreed on global frequency allocations for Radio Local Area Network (RLAN) systems in frequency bands around 5 GHz which is becoming popular in Europe and which is already being used to provide broadband access in Ireland. The result successfully balances government, commercial and consumer interests.

- (ii) Conclusion on spectrum and regulatory issues around Galileo (the European 'GPS'<sup>3</sup> satellite system). The conclusions of WRC-03 removed the uncertainties around spectrum allocation for Galileo and set out the regulatory framework to allow new satellite navigation systems to share the same frequency bands as existing GPS and Glonass systems. This decision will aid the move towards a European navigation satellite system providing enhanced navigational and positioning capabilities;
- (iii) Certainty on the further development of IMT-2000, the third generation (3G) mobile communications system, including protecting IMT-2000 networks from interference by other systems and regulatory procedures to facilitate use of high-altitude platform stations (HAPS) as IMT-2000 base stations;
- (iv) The resolution of a number of issues concerning the regulation of maritime distress and safety issues, important for the Irish shipping and fishing industry;
- (v) Resolving a number of satellite network regulatory issues which will permit further sharing between terrestrial (e.g., fixed links) and satellite services that share bands. This includes outstanding issues affecting VSAT operations, one of the primary satellite network applications used in Ireland.

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<sup>3</sup> GPS: Global Positioning System, a US military radiolocation system available for civilian use, which allows users to pinpoint their location anywhere in the world to within 10m

Full details of the outcome including a comprehensive report, focussing on the European Common Positions can be found on the ERO web site at [www.ero.dk](http://www.ero.dk) .

For the next conference in 2007, some of the key agenda items include:

- Considering and reviewing allocations of spectrum for Earth-Exploration Satellite Services; these are important satellite services that monitor the earth's environment and resources. Also additional spectrum will be considered for meteorological-satellite services which provide weather updates and weather warnings worldwide. There are a number of users of these services in Ireland.
- Consider additional allocations for the aeronautical mobile service (aircraft) between 108 MHz and 6 GHz to resolve the current congestion problems and to ensure the continuing integrity of aeronautical related radiocommunication services. This is a key requirement in facilitating the growth of the aviation industry in Ireland.
- To examine the results of studies on frequency related matters concerning the development of IMT-2000 (3G) and future generations of enhanced mobile communication services to ensure that spectrum is available when needed.
- To review the operational procedures and requirements of the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) - the system that provides safety and distress communications for shipping.

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