

# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2004



2009

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*Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection*

**2008/2099(INI)**

28.5.2008

## **OPINION**

of the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection

for the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy

on reaping the full benefits of the digital dividend in Europe: a common approach to the use of spectrum released by the digital switchover (2008/2099(INI))

Draftswoman: Heide Rühle

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## SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection calls on the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Agrees to the need to ensure the optimal use of digital dividend from the social, educational, cultural and economic perspectives;
2. Emphasises the need for digital switchover, which together with the development of new information and communication technologies and the digital dividend will help to bridge the digital divide and contribute to the achievement of the Lisbon goals;
3. Underlines that spectrum is a key resource and important for the effective functioning of the internal market; agrees that the digital dividend is a unique opportunity to open up spectrum for broadcasters to develop and expand their services and to cover at the same time the fast growing demand for wireless communication services, especially in rural areas; underlines that greater investment should be made at national and European level to encourage the take up of innovative products and services; underlines that efforts to secure access to broadband services should not be focused on the digital dividend alone;
4. Notes the divergence in national regimes for spectrum allocation and exploitation and the existing national disparities; notes the fact that these differences may represent obstacles to the achievement of an effectively functioning single market;
5. Urges the Member States to come up with national action plans on the use and implementation of freed-up spectrum and the potential of the digital dividend that will be available after digital switchover;
6. Acknowledges that coordination at EU level would encourage development, boost the digital economy and allow all citizens affordable and equal access to the information society;
7. Underlines the importance of technical neutrality to promote innovation and interoperability; calls for a more flexible and transparent policy for the consideration of the public interest which includes homogeneous territorial coverage, pluralism of the media, cultural diversity and protection against interference;
8. Calls on Member States to support enhanced cooperation measures between spectrum management authorities to consider areas where common spectrum allocation would allow new technologies and services to emerge;
9. Calls for a step by step approach in this field; is of the opinion that effects for smaller networks - especially local wireless networks - for which no license requirements currently apply must be taken into account and that universal access to broadband, especially in rural areas, should be promoted;
10. Agrees to the need for coordination at EU level to ensure that the full potential of the digital dividend is unlocked, but also underlines the need to ensure flexibility to address

national regulatory prerogatives, such as local social, cultural and market needs; agrees that where common spectrum policy at EU level is necessary, it should remain under the constant review of democratically legitimate institutions so that appropriate adjustments can be made;

11. Agrees to move towards a more coherent spectrum planning at EU level and to prepare the required measures to reserve and coordinate a sub-band for cross-border services.
12. Calls on the Commission to ensure that consumers' rights are protected and that the consumer is the main beneficiary of the digital dividend.

## RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

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| <b>Date adopted</b>   | 27.5.2008  |
| <b>Result of final vote</b>                                       | + :           34<br>- :<br>0 :   |
| <b>Members present for the final vote</b>                         | Cristian Silviu Buşoi, Charlotte Cederschiöld, Gabriela Creţu, Janelly Fourtou, Evelyne Gebhardt, Martí Grau i Segú, Małgorzata Handzlik, Malcolm Harbour, Iliana Malinova Iotova, Pierre Jonckheer, Graf Alexander Lambsdorff, Kurt Lechner, Toine Manders, Nickolay Mladenov, Catherine Neris, Zita Pleštinská, Zuzana Roithová, Heide Rühle, Leopold Józef Rutowicz, Salvador Domingo Sanz Palacio, Christel Schaldemose, Andreas Schwab, Marianne Thyssen, Bernadette Vergnaud, Barbara Weiler |
| <b>Substitute(s) present for the final vote</b>                   | Wolfgang Bulfon, Giovanna Corda, Jan Cremers, Wolf Klinz, Manuel Medina Ortega, Gary Titley  |
| <b>Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote</b> | Elisabeth Morin, Sirpa Pietikäinen, Nicolae Vlad Popa  |