

National Broadcasting Council of Latvia

With regard to the public consultation "Transforming the digital dividend opportunity into social benefits and economic growth in Europe", the National Broadcasting Council of Latvia has the following comments:

While recognising the need to elaborate a cogent policy with regard to the role of the digital dividend in European economic recovery, the Broadcasting Council is very much concerned with the promotion of the public interest and views any actions that might restrict Member States' right to determine their own policies vis a vis the digital dividend and which could result in a deterioration of broadcasting services with great scepticism.

We would draw the Commission's attention to the declaration of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe "**On the allocation and management of the digital dividend and the public interest**" (adopted on 20 February 2008 at the 1018th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies), which states inter alia:

"Recognising, without prejudice to ongoing efforts within other international fora to find a harmonised approach, the right of member states to define their own policies regarding the transition from analogue to digital broadcasting, and the use of the digital dividend, understood as radio spectrum capacity freed as a result of the switchover to the digital environment; [...]"

Declares that member states:

- i. should acknowledge the public nature of the digital dividend resulting from the switchover and the need to manage such a public resource efficiently in the public interest, taking account of present and foreseeable future needs for radio spectrum;
- ii. should pay special attention to the promotion of innovation, pluralism, cultural and linguistic diversity, and access of the public to audiovisual services in the allocation and management of the digital dividend and, for this purpose, take in due account the needs of broadcasters and of the media at large, both public service and commercial media, as well as those of other existing or incoming spectrum users;
- iii. should also consider the benefit that the allocation and management of the digital dividend may bring to society in terms of an increased number of diversified audiovisual services, including mobile services, with potentially improved geographical coverage and interactive capability, as well as services offering high definition technology, mobile reception, or easier and more affordable access. "

The National Broadcasting Council would, therefore, ask the Commission to take full consideration of the public interest when drafting the proposed road map.