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The European Commission can mandate the European Conference on Postal and Telecommunications (CEPT) to carry out studies and other preparatory activities to harmonise the use of the radio spectrum in Europe. The co-operative interaction of CEPT with Commission-led initiatives has been a key factor in the development of wireless technologies in Europe.
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The European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administrations (CEPT) was established in 1959 by 19 countries. Its original members were the incumbent monopoly-holding national postal and telecommunications administrations. Today, CEPT membership stands at 48. CEPT's activities include co-operation on commercial, operational, regulatory and technical standardisation issues. There is a Memorandum of Understanding between CEPT and the Commission to support on-going activities on harmonisation of radio spectrum, and the Commission is a Counsellor to CEPT.

CEPT works via two main committees: one for postal issues and the Electronic Communications Committee (ECC). The ECC brings together the radio- and telecommunications regulatory authorities of the CEPT member countries. The committee is supported by a permanent office, the European Communications Office (ECO), which was opened in May 1991 and is located in Copenhagen, Denmark. The ECO supports the work of ECC in radiocommunications and provides a centre of expertise.

Another important CEPT-initiated body is the European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI). This non-profit organisation with a mission to produce telecommunications industry standards that will serve the long-term development of the ICT sector in Europe and beyond was established in Sophia Antipolis in France in 1988. The ETSI membership of around 700 organisations covers equipment makers and network operators in Europe and globally, as well as other stakeholders such as administrators, service providers, research bodies and users. ETSI is recognised as an official European Standards Organisation by the Commission.

All EU Member States delegate radio spectrum experts to work in the CEPT committees and various working groups.

What is an EC mandate?

An EC mandate is a request from the European Commission via its Radio Spectrum Committee (RSC) to the CEPT to conduct technical studies in order to develop technical implementing measures at Community level. Such measures may be specifications or other documentation on specific technologies and their application that will ensure harmonised conditions for the availability and efficient use of radio spectrum in Europe.

The ability of the RSC to mandate the CEPT was established under the Radio Spectrum Decision. Each

EC mandate formulated together with the RSC must specify the task that the CEPT is being asked to perform and the timetable that it should be achieved in.

The technical remit of the mandates may vary widely from a limited focus on a narrow frequency band or a specific technology to a wider consideration of harmonisation or refarming of frequencies on a very broad scale.

The RSC and CEPT work closely together and the CEPT reports – or results of CEPT studies – initiated by the mandates feed into and form the technical basis for RSC decisions. These in turn are the basis for Commission Decisions or proposals that set the framework for the EU radio spectrum policy environment.

More information

- European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administrations (**CEPT** [1])
- European Communications Office (**ECO** [2])
- European Telecommunications Standards Institute (**ETSI** [3])
- **Recent mandates to CEPT** [4]
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Links
[1] http://www.cept.org/
[2] http://www.ero.dk
[3] http://www.etsi.org/WebSite/homepage.aspx
[4] http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/policy/ecomm/radio_spectrum/eu_policy/rsc/rsc_ref_site/mandates/index_en.htm
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