

Digital Single Market

Flexibility - the key to competition and innovation

As demand for the use of radio spectrum increases, a more flexible approach to spectrum allocation is needed. This includes the reduction of rigid allocations of spectrum to specific technologies or services in order to speed up the response to market developments and facilitate infrastructure competition.

The need for a new approach

Radio spectrum is the lifeblood of the information society. Therefore, facilitating access to radio spectrum resources in Europe, and developing the synergies resulting from a common European approach, will bring significant economic and social benefits. To achieve this will require moving away from the traditional radio management strategy of tying usage rights of spectrum bands to specific transmission technologies and narrow service definitions.

A new, flexible approach is needed to allow service providers to use the radio resources in the way they need, while avoiding interference to neighbouring networks. It is also an essential condition for achieving the full potential of available radio spectrum resources and enabling society to benefit from current and future technological advances, the convergence of information technologies and their services.

To enable flexibility for wireless electronic communication services the European Commission has developed a Wireless Access Policy for Electronic Communications Services ([WAPECS](#) ^[1]).

Wireless broadband as an example

De-regulated access to spectrum can encourage the development and use of innovative technologies and the Commission's strategy for [promoting flexible market-based spectrum](#) ^[2] authorisations also aims at creating new opportunities in existing allocations, e.g. spectrum formerly used for voice communications will become available for new broadband technologies which allow mobile Internet access.

Similarly, the Commission believes that a flexible approach should be taken when identifying parts of the radio spectrum for new uses. For example the transition from analogue to digital broadcasting led to a considerable "[digital dividend](#) ^[2]" in available spectrum resources. Such [reallocations of spectrum](#) ^[3] present an opportunity to identify spectrum for new services across Europe including

applications such as wireless broadband and innovative wireless services.

More information

- Communication on "Rapid access to spectrum for wireless electronic communications services through more flexibility", [COM \(2007\)50 final](#) [4]
- [Regulatory framework for electronic communications in the EU today](#) [5]
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Published:

6 September 2012

Last update:

14 June 2017

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