

BNE position on the UHF legislative proposal

Europe's unique audiovisual model sustains its creative and cultural sector's economy and jobs¹. It is a huge asset for Europe's competitive position in the digital and creative world. The cultural diversity and media pluralism this sector provides deserve support and a strong industrial strategy. Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) broadcasting networks are the key pillars of Free-to-Air Television delivery. They provide live, local, diverse and plural European content to the general public. In Europe, DTT is used and appreciated by some 250 million Europeans and is a key pillar of the European content and creative industry.

The conclusions of the RSPG UHF Opinion and the Lamy Report as well as the results from the World Radio Conference (WRC-15), made explicit the need for a change of mindset from platform convergence to platform co-existence. Such an approach will most effectively meet different consumer needs and expectations as well as supporting Europe's cultural diversity. It will support original content creation, promote media pluralism and sustain the development of both audiovisual and live performance sectors - sectors which have successfully co-existed for decades.

The conclusions of the RSPG Opinion, the Lamy report, and from the WRC-15 were reached with participation and support from, industry, national administrations and regulatory authorities. Those conclusions emerged after the participation of high level representatives from mobile and broadcast in the case the Lamy Report. The RSPG Opinion and the Lamy report provided certainty for all sectors with a clear, unbiased and balanced picture about how to manage the UHF band.

"This certainty, together with the European Union strategy emphasizing the role of DTT for the foreseeable future, will allow the Broadcast Network Operators and their customers the TV channels to continue to innovate and develop the European DTT platform." says Olivier Huart, BNE Chairman.

It is time to call on European policy makers to recognize the importance of DTT; to recognize the outcome of WRC 15; to build upon the conclusions of RSPG and Lamy, and to position the creative and cultural industries at the heart of Europe's Digital Single Market objectives.

BNE is committed to keeping this unique win-win opportunity alive and to promote the spirit of compromise which guided these agreements and conclusions. BNE urges the European Commission, the European Parliament and the European Council to return to the original RSPG and Lamy proposals in its proposed final *Decision on the use of the 470-790MHz frequency band in the Union* by returning to the following original points:

- 1) *Guarantee, until at least 2030, access to the sub 700MHz band for high quality and reliable DTT services.* In doing so, both citizens and the broadcast sector will receive certainty to underpin investments in receiving equipment, migration efforts and networks.
- 2) *Replace the principle of flexibility in making the 700 MHz band available for WBB until the end of 2022.* In doing so, migration costs will be reduced and provide realistic timescales for technical changes for all EU Member States.
- 3) *Provide assurances that DTT services will receive reasonable treatment on compensation costs for forced migration of their services as agreed at a Member State level.*

EU policy-makers in close consultation with all stakeholders and civil society need to define a European industrial policy which will recognise that DTT enables the cultural, creative and media industries to be an engine for growth and development in Europe.

¹ Accounting for 6.8% share of GDP (€860 billion) and 6.5% of Europe's employment (approximately 14 million direct and indirect jobs).