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NOTE

From:	Presidency
To:	Law Enforcement Working Party
No. prev. doc.:	10783/13
Subject:	Progress report of the Radio Communications Expert Group (RCEG) and the results of its meeting held on 2 May 2014 in Athens

Background

The Recommendation on improving radio communication between operational units in the border areas was approved by the Council at its meeting on 4-5 June 2009 (10141/09 ENFOPOL 143 TELECOM 116 COMIX 421). It recommended, *inter alia*, establishing a group of experts to examine issues relating to the development of inter-system interfaces, the Radio Communication Expert Group (RCEG).

At its meeting in Stockholm on 24-25 November 2009, the RCEG agreed to set up two sub-groups: the Forerunner group and the Inter-System Interface (ISI) group.

The Hellenic Police organised a regular RCEG meeting on 2 May 2014 in Athens. The meeting was attended by participants from 19 countries: 17 Member States - Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Finland, as well as from Norway and Switzerland.

At this meeting the RCEG received progress reports from its two subgroups.

Progress of the Forerunner group

The Forerunner group has 2 tasks:

- to work on harmonised mobile broadband data technical solutions, and
- to work on harmonised frequency bands.

The following recent developments could be noted:

As reported in the latest RCEG progress report to the LEWP under the Irish Presidency the frequency issue is dealt with within the ECC/CEPT WGFM-PT49 group, focusing in particular on the frequencies for public safety.

This group prepared the public protection and disaster relief (PPDR) report A, containing the public safety broadband requirements and the calculation of the number of required frequencies. The conclusion is a minimum of 2x10MHz for the network solution itself, plus extra frequencies needed for other mobile broadband applications like ad-hoc networks to be used in the event of a disaster or for big events.

The next step is the so-called report B, which will advise where these frequencies can be allocated. The two main options are the 400MHz and 700MHz bands. This advice will go to CEPT-FM for approval and delivery of report B is expected in early 2015.

Taking as a reference the European radio spectrum harmonisation and cross-border operations for mobile broadband (high speed data communications) for public protection and disaster relief (PPDR-AI 1.3), including the timing of actions leading up to the World Radiocommunication Conference 2015 (WRC15) to be held from 2 to 27 November 2015 in Geneva (Switzerland), the RCEG prepared a statement on BB PPDR frequencies to be sent on behalf of the LEWP set out in annex.

As reported in the Irish progress report, the Tetra + Critical Communications Association (TCCA) have established a subgroup – the Critical Communications Broadband Group (CCBG) – dealing with future mobile broadband solutions for mission critical users.

Several members of the RCEG participate in both WGFM-PT49 and CCBG meetings. The focus of the WGFM-PT49 is the PPDR harmonised frequency issue, while the CCBG is focusing on the technical solution for PPDR, among other aspects.

Progress of the ISI group

The mission of the ISI group is to develop one or more roaming interface prototypes, directly compatible with all the existing TETRA and TETRAPOL nationwide radio networks for Public Safety Services (PSS) in the EU, in order to trigger the commercialisation of effective roaming interfaces.

As mentioned in previous RCEG progress reports, the ISITEP consortium submitted an application for funding on 23 November 2011 under the 7th Framework Programme topic proposal "Global solution for interoperability between first responder communication systems - Integration Project". In total two applications were submitted for this topic. The grant agreement has now been reached and the ISITEP project is being funded by the European Commission.

The project is scheduled to be carried out between 1/9/2013 and 31/8/2016. Thereafter possible commercial solutions could be developed. The prototyping of commercial solutions is outside the scope of the project.

Other results of the RCEG meeting held on 2 May 2014 in Athens

- There was an update from the ECC/CEPT WGFM-PT49 on the work done by the group concerning frequencies to support the operations of European public safety organisations. RCEG reiterated its support for the work done by the WGFM-PT49.
- RCEG also expressed its growing concern over the lack of progress in European work on the development of a common view and a final proposal to be submitted to the WRC15 conference regarding the 700 MHz frequency range as a basis for mobile broadband PPDR services.
- RCEG also expressed its concern that five years after the adoption of the Council Recommendation on improving radio communication between operational units in border areas (doc. 10141/09), in which CEPT/ECC is directly addressed by the Council, there is still no focused initiative within the frequency authorities to have an agreement for PPDR mobile broadband at the WRC15.
- Then too, RCEG reached the following conclusions:
 - ❖ The only harmonised band for PP1 should be the 700 MHz band in conjunction with both the CEPT-BB-PPDR-flexibility and the full interoperability described in the ECC Report 199.
 - ❖ The 400 MHz range may provide national flexibility in addition to 700 MHz.
 - ❖ No harmonisation in any band above the 700 MHz band for PP1, but it is recognised that to be able to roam to commercial networks in a hybrid model, the terminals must also include those frequencies. In addition some countries may use commercial networks until their national PPDR solution becomes available, and therefore need to have those frequencies included.
 - ❖ Harmonisation of frequencies for PP2 + DR (e.g. ad-hoc networks, special cases) which can be >1GHz.

- On this basis it was agreed to remain in close contact with the national representatives in CEPT CPG, CEPT CPG PTA, CEPT WGFM, CEPT WGFM-PT49 and the Commission, encouraging the CEPT/ECC to ensure a timely delivery of 700 MHz position as a basis for mobile broadband PPDR services ahead of the WRC15, taking into account the long-standing Council Recommendation (doc. 10141/09).
- The concept of the flexible CEPT BB PPDR harmonisation was addressed. The conclusion was that future harmonisation of PPDR has to be flexible enough to respect different national and governmental circumstances and directives such as different operational scenarios, available amount of spectrum, individual required bandwidth and types of networks such as dedicated, commercial, hybrid (mixture of dedicated and commercial).
- The RCEG members were asked by the chairman of the FM49 group to contact their national frequency administrations and military administrations (if appropriate) regarding the possibility of sharing spectrum for the band 4940-4990 MHz (i.e. MIL band in ITU region 1 and PPDR band in ITU regions 2 and 3) for PP2 and disaster recovery scenarios. Member States were invited to participate as much as possible in the PT49 work and contact their national frequency administrations also for any possible commercial PPDR usage on IMT bands above 790 MHz (i.e. 800 MHz, 900 MHz, 1800 MHz, 2100 MHz and 2600 MHz).
- France presented the progress of the work done in the CCBG regarding mobile broadband data communication.
- Greece presented the National Digital Radio Service (TETRA) in Greece and an example of use of a TETRA mobile station. Other presentations regarding EU research programmes in which Greek companies participate were also made (PPDR-TC, ISITEP tools, E-sponder)

- There was a briefing by the President of the Public Safety Communication Europe Forum (PSCE) (via videoconference) on H2020 and the role and benefits of pre-commercial procurement (PCP) followed by a discussion on the DRS-18 project "Interoperable next generation of broadband radio communication system for public safety and security". Delegations were invited to think about this project and check with their national contact points or organisations whether participation as a buyer (financing and running a pilot) or as a beneficiary (contributing to pilot specifications) would be useful and officially supported. If agreed by the incoming Presidency of the RCEG, the responses from the national contact points would be discussed and analysed at the next RCEG meeting.
- The Chairman initiated a discussion on the future of the RCEG and self-evaluation of the group. A questionnaire was submitted during the meeting, and a more detailed overview of replies is included in doc. 10748/14. In general, most experts stated that:
 - ❖ They believe that the RCEG and its two sub-groups should continue to be organised in the same way, with lead countries coordinating the activities of the group. It was also suggested to form an additional ad-hoc support group to help draw up a working programme for the RCEG.
 - ❖ RCEG experts are in favour of organising conference calls, video or web conferences or written correspondence when needed to discuss issues that do not require face-to-face meetings.
 - ❖ Where relevant, cooperative relations should be established with other LEWP-related expert groups and networks such as ENLETS and eMobidig with a view to benefiting from their work.

Conclusion

The RCEG recommends continuing the ongoing activities of the Forerunner and ISI subgroups under the forthcoming Italian Presidency.

The next RCEG meeting is scheduled to take place on 18-19 November 2014 in Rome.

The LEWP is invited to:

- (1) take note of this report;**
 - (2) discuss whether the letter set out in annex should be submitted to COREPER for approval before sending it to the relevant external stakeholders.**
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LEWP position on BB PPDR frequencies

Reference: European radio spectrum harmonisation and cross-border operations for mobile broadband (high-speed data communications) for public protection and disaster relief (PPDR-AI 1.3) including the timing of actions leading up to the WRC15.

To:

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Dear Sirs,

First of all, the Presidency of the Law Enforcement Working Party (LEWP) of the Council of the EU would like to thank and congratulate the ECC for its work on the harmonisation of BB PPDR within the 48 CEPT countries.

Based on the conclusions of the Radio Communications Experts' Group (RCEG), the LEWP welcomes and supports the present status of the European harmonisation for BB PPDR as described in the FM49 Progress Report published on <http://www.cept.org/ecc/groups/ecc/wg-fm/fm-49/client/meeting-documents> (file “Vilnius”, sub file “Report”, document number FM49(14)012), in which FM49 concludes that there is only major support for the **700 MHz spectrum**.

RCEG at its recent meeting on 2 May 2014 in Athens noted that even the European BB PPDR harmonisation of the minimum required bandwidth calculated as 2x10 MHz (under the minimum condition of consensus) for the day-to-day-communication (ITU-R definition PP1) cannot take place in the 400 MHz range, because the 400 MHz spectrum suffers from the highest user density in Europe. However, RCEG agrees that the accommodation of BB PPDR in the 400 MHz range may provide national flexibility.

RCEG further noted that there is a lack of capacity for special cases (for example DMO) and voice transmissions. A lack of capacity was also noted for temporary use (ad-hoc-networks) for big events (ITU-R definition PP2) and disaster relief operations (ITU-R definition DR).

Therefore RCEG also requests a harmonised spectrum for the temporary ad-hoc operations PP2 and DR in a suitable spectrum, preferably above 1 GHz.

It is the view of RCEG that the goal of flexible harmonisation may influence the PPDR organisation's choice of terminals in ensuring service delivery to our citizens.

An important requirement is full interoperability between the European PPDR organisations, preferably worldwide in order to allow assistance to be provided in disasters in other regions.

Since the PPDR organisations have identified that a solution in Europe is required, as close as possible to the commercial LTE eco-system, it will be an advantage if countries wishing to introduce PPDR broadband services offered by a commercial operator do so in the harmonised 700MHz solution (where those frequencies are nationally available).

In order to create the hybrid model using both dedicated capability and commercial networks alongside the dedicated model, it must be possible to roam to commercial networks. For the terminals to be able to do so, the frequencies used in the commercial networks should be included in the terminals used by the PPDR organisations.

Furthermore, RCEG would like to refer to the RSPG conclusions on PPDR:

"The RSPG recognised that the provision of PPDR services, including the associated radio-communications facilities is a sovereign national matter, and that the broadband PPDR needs of Member States may vary to a significant extent. Therefore, the future harmonisation of the broadband PPDR sector in Europe needs to be flexible enough to respect national sovereignties and different national circumstances such as; the amount of available spectrum and the type of network deployed and used which may be dedicated, commercial or a hybrid solution (a mixture of dedicated and commercial networks). There are requirements to ensure adequate interoperability between the RSPG13-540 (rev2) different countries. Also the possibilities of maximising the benefits from the economies of scale should be taken into account."

To summarise the conclusions:

1. The only harmonised band for PP1 should be the 700 MHz band in conjunction with both, the CEPT-BB-PPDR-flexibility and the full interoperability described in the ECC Report 199.
2. The 400 MHz range may provide national flexibility in addition to 700 MHz.
3. No harmonisation in any band above the 700 MHz band for PP1, but it is recognised that to be able to roam to commercial networks in a hybrid model, the terminals must also include those frequencies. In addition some countries may use commercial networks until their national PPDR solution becomes available, and therefore need to have those frequencies included.
4. Harmonisation of frequencies for PP2 + DR (e.g. ad-hoc networks, special cases) which can be >1GHz.

In addition, RCEG agreed that it is of paramount importance that agreement on the 700 MHz frequency range is reached by the end of 2014 in order to meet the WRC15 deadlines.

RCEG also brought to the attention of the LEWP its growing concern that five years after the Council Recommendation on improving radio communication between operational units in border areas (doc. 10141/069), in which CEPT/ECC is directly addressed by the Council, there was still no focused initiative within the frequency authorities to have an agreement for PPDR mobile broadband at the WRC15.

The CEPT/ECC is herewith encouraged to ensure a timely delivery of said 700 MHz position ahead of the WRC15 taking into account the aforementioned long-standing Recommendation of the Council of the European Union.

The Chair of the LEWP
