

May 18, 2007

To: EU Commissioners José Manuel Barroso President
Günter Verheugen Vice President
Viviane Reding
Louis Michel
Peter Mandelson

Cc: BEPA Director General Vitor Gaspar
RSPG Chairman François Rancy, Directeur Général, ANFR
CEPT Presidency Maria van der Hoeven, Minister for Economic Affairs, Netherlands
ECC Chairman Chris van Diepenbeek
CPG Chairman Anders Frederich

Re: Threat to Vital Global Satellite Operations

Dear Madams, Sirs,

The global satellite communications sector¹ wishes to express its grave concern over recent developments in European discussions concerning one of the most extensively used satellite frequency bands known as 'C-Band'.² We urge the European Commission to intervene without delay to ensure that the satellite industry is able to maintain and expand its essential services and operations worldwide.

¹ We together represent all major trade associations and action groups made up of over 400 companies with a combined turnover in excess of €66billion per year - Futron Corporation, State of the Satellite Industry Report, June 2006 – through the European Satellite Operator's Association ("ESOA"), the Satellite Action Plan Regulatory Group ("SAP REG"), the Global VSAT Forum ("GVF"), the Satellite Industry Association ("SIA"), the Satellite Users Interference Reduction Group ("SUIRG"), the Mobile Satellite Users Association (MSUA), the World Teleport Association ("WTA"), the Asia-Pacific Satellite Communications Committee ("APSCC") and the European Integral Satcom Initiative ("ISI")

² From 3400 to 4200 MHz

Certain European administrations, through the CEPT,³ intend to propose at the October 2007 World Radiocommunications Conference (“WRC-07”) of the ITU⁴ that parts of, or even the entire, C-Band downlink satellite spectrum be opened globally for terrestrial mobile services. Such a decision would result in major harm to the satellite industry and users.

We have repeatedly voiced our concerns to the appropriate EC and CEPT officials and working groups and since the matter is becoming extremely urgent, we wish to make you aware that any change to the present ITU regulations for this band would endanger existing operations and threaten the growth of satellite services in Europe and elsewhere.

In many parts of the world, C-band is the only reliable satellite band. This occurs because the C-band signals are impervious to atmospheric conditions, particularly those in Equatorial Africa, Asia and the Americas.

All 800 MHz of the C-Band satellite downlink spectrum today provides absolutely essential and basic communications services in many parts of the world and between Europe and the rest of the world. Some of these even enable the operations of mobile services that cannot be provided by other means. Others include basic telephony, TV and broadband services; services specific to development such as tele-education and tele-medicine; and those services that are fundamental to the disaster management cycle such as disaster relief communications and meteorological tracking (e.g. tsunamis).

Around the world, approximately 160 geostationary satellites utilize the C-band today, representing an aggregate spacecraft and launch investment in excess of €30 billion. Furthermore, most commercial satellites under construction will use this band as well. No alternative bands exist with the signal quality, spectrum efficiency, availability and reach of the C-band. Studies have also shown that ‘sharing’ of this band with terrestrial mobile technologies results in interference and is not feasible⁵. This fact is evidenced in several places around the world where satellite users and operators have already suffered significant interference from widely deployed terrestrial technologies.

With the European proposal under discussion, the satellite communications sector is put at serious risk. European satellite companies derive important revenues from services in this band, including those generated outside Europe.

The satellite industry associations remain strongly opposed to the preliminary European proposal to WRC-07⁶ to open any part of the C-band for terrestrial mobile technologies such as IMT. We therefore urge the European Commission to intervene without delay with EU national administrations to reverse this planned proposal and to promote a position of “No Change” to the ITU Radio Regulations for the entire C-Band (3 400 – 4 200 MHz).

³ The Conférence Européenne des Postes et Télécommunications

⁴ The International Telecommunications Union

⁵ Refer to www.esoa.net for further documentation

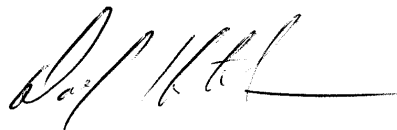
⁶ Under WRC-07 Agenda Item 1.4

Time is of the essence. European national administrations are currently determining their views in preparation for the adoption of a common position in early July.

Sincerely,



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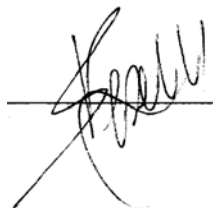
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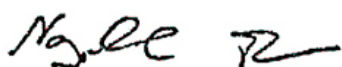
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