

RADIO REGULATIONS

100th Anniversary

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European Radiocommunications Office and the ITU Radio Regulations

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Long live ITU Radio Regulations !

The ITU Radio Regulations are celebrating their 100 years anniversary, yet one could say that they have never been younger and more alive than they are today. Being a comprehensive set of regulations, striking a fine balance between the needs of several dozens of radiocommunications services, the ITU Radio Regulations remain a living and topical document, much needed for the daily functioning of international spectrum management.

The latest technological and market developments, which have allowed radiocommunication devices to permeate all aspects of our lives, from RF identification of our groceries to life-saving missions in times of disaster, put even more focus on the ITU Radio Regulations. Many of these modern

devices surround each and every individual and will travel with them between and across borders, through the Global Village, be it for holidays or for business. So it is only thanks to a finely-tuned international regulatory framework that the efficient use of these universal devices and avoidance of mutual interference could be ensured.

In the area of international spectrum management the ITU Radio Regulations have a proven track record and, I believe, today they constitute the best basis for further developments in this area. It is easier to adjust something existing, which has undergone an evolutionary change through many years of careful development (I am thinking here of the many busy night sessions at conferences in Geneva and elsewhere!), than to start something from scratch.

The developments we foresee will need some simpler and more market oriented spectrum management concepts. The large degree of liberalization already implemented in many countries around the globe, and which are expected to develop and spread further, will need a solid, internationally agreed and harmonized basis. The ITU Radio Regulations is the only internationally agreed instrument today which could be the basis for such future harmonization of liberal and simplified spectrum management.

Below are some possible avenues for modification/development of the ITU Radio Regulations, which would ensure them a long-lasting future:

- Every effort should be made to remove the split into different world regions if we want to address the true global harmonization seriously. The global bands would allow radio services to develop more efficiently, letting economies of scale work, all this leading to further spreading of radiocommunications, especially to less-developed parts of the world.
- The conservative nature of spectrum allocations should be gradually and carefully changed towards a more liberal one, allowing flexibility and convergence to work.

- Along the same line, the spectrum allocations should migrate from a service-based approach to an application-based approach, where only the most important compatibility factors would be regulated, such as maximum transmitter power, antenna heights and receiver selectivity.
- The above steps towards service neutrality and convergence would also make the secondary allocation concept obsolete with time.
- The licence-free use (the “commons” concept) should become the preferred choice for utilization for most (non-mission-critical) bands and applications, reducing regulatory barriers and fostering innovation. The ITU Radio Regulations are today the only instrument for promoting such use internationally.

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