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First radio spectrum policy programme Political agreement between Council and Parliament

The Council and the European Parliament have paved way towards the adoption of the draft decision establishing the first radio spectrum policy programme 2012-2015. On 23 October, the European Council called for rapid agreement on this programme.

The text as it stands now was negotiated in trilogue meetings between the Polish presidency, the European Parliament and the European Commission. Today it was endorsed by the Permanent Representatives Committee of the Council. Once it has also been endorsed by the ITRE Committee of the European Parliament, the Council will be able to adopt its position at first reading, which is expected to be confirmed by the Parliament (by the plenary, in the first quarter of 2012).

The aim of the programme is to set out policy orientations and objectives for the strategic planning and harmonisation of spectrum use in order to ensure the functioning of the internal market. The programme covers all EU policy areas involving the use of spectrum such as electronic communications, research, technological development and space, transport, energy and audio-visual.

The new programme seeks to achieve in particular the following policy objectives:

- encourage efficient management and use of spectrum;
- allocate sufficient and appropriate spectrum in a timely manner to support EU policy objectives and, for that purpose, make every effort to identify, based on an inventory of spectrum, at least 1200 MHz of spectrum by 2015 at the latest;

P R E S S

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- bridge the digital divide and contribute to the objectives of the Digital Agenda for Europe by fostering access to broadband at a speed of not less than 30 Mbps by 2020 for all EU citizens;
- enable the EU to take the lead in wireless electronic communication broadband services by freeing up sufficient spectrum in cost-efficient bands for these services to be widely available;
- promote innovation and investment;
- maintain and develop effective competition, in particular in electronic communication services;
- reduce the fragmentation and fully exploit the potential of the internal market in order to foster economic growth and economies of scale in the EU.

The decision provides for the establishing of an inventory of existing uses of spectrum for commercial and public purposes. The inventory will be administered by the Commission, which by July 2013 will adopt relevant implementing acts to develop modalities and formats for the collection and provision of data by the member states.

The Commission will review the application of this programme by 31 December 2015 and it will report on the implementation of this decision to the Council and the Parliament no later than two years after its entry into force.