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**Radio Spectrum Battles in the era of Technological Convergence: Broadcast vs Broadband**

Radio spectrum, a natural but limited resource, has always had competing claims made upon it. The proliferation and popularity of wireless technologies, services and devices has put pressure on the most favourable, and already congested, spectrum bands. Radio spectrum allocation decisions involve the international, European and national regulatory levels. Such decisions are obviously technical but also, and increasingly, highly political since which industry gets access to frequencies shapes its market growth opportunities. The most recent spectrum battle in Europe is between terrestrial broadcasters and mobile broadband operators.

The transfrontier character of radio frequencies would make it ideal for common pan-European action, but this hasn’t been the case. Having reviewed the historical evolution of EU radio spectrum policy, this paper concentrates on the current debate about the future of the UHF band (470-862 MHz) in the context of the EU consultations in the run up to the ITU WRC negotiations in November 2015. In Europe, the UHF band has traditionally been used primarily for the provision of universal, free-at-the-point of reception public television services. As part of the digital dividend, terrestrial broadcasters have already relinquished the so-called 800MHz band to the mobile industry to accommodate its exponential growth. The current negotiations focus on the future use of the sub- 800MHz frequencies. The debate is complicated. Non-European countries in the ITU Region 1 notably in Africa and the Middle East lacking a strong DTT platform wish to allocate more UHF spectrum to mobile broadband. Moreover, although the DTT platform is well established in Europe, the picture in different countries varies. Some European countries (like Finland and Sweden) have already announced plans to reallocate the 700MHz from terrestrial television to mobile services. National decisions run ahead and fragmentation within Europe seems likely.

The paper has two aims. First, the outcome of this debate will shape the future of broadcasting. Secondly, the paper analyses the arguments put forward in this debate by the digital terrestrial broadcasters and the mobile industry, in order to identify continuities, ruptures, and inconsistencies. For instance, since it is primarily PBSers who rely on DTT in most countries, the continuing pressure on the UHF band can be seen as part of the broader efforts to minimise PSB. In line with past practice, PSBers and their supporters justify their position (the need to allow sufficient spectrum for the terrestrial platform) more in terms of democratic and cultural values, as a diminished DTT platform will fundamentally alter the conditions citizens access broadcasting. The mobile industry justifies its demands more in economic and industrial terms, all the more important in times of economic recession. It is also interesting to note competing conceptualisations of ‘convergence’. In relation to spectrum, it seems that the mobile industry supports the idea of technological convergence and European-level solutions. But in other instances, for example roaming, the mobile industry seems to support national solutions.

In terms of methodology, the paper is based on media policy literature, extensive documentary analysis, discussions and participation in various fora where these issues are being debated.