



Brussels, 13 November 2007

COMMERCIAL BROADCASTERS AND REVISED EU COMMUNICATIONS REGULATION:

European commercial broadcasters reacted to the publication today of proposals to revise the electronic communications regulatory framework, commenting that the texts needed detailed scrutiny from the European Parliament and Member States. This is a very complex package of legislation, which has already provoked considerable debate. It is clear that further difficult debates lie ahead. Politically, the new European Communications Market Authority may dominate debates – but there are equally important and complex issues to be clarified in many areas, including in relation to spectrum and the principles of technology and service neutrality.

Speaking in Brussels, Ross Biggam, the Director General of the ACT said:

“We would question whether the EU has an adequate legal basis for the extent of harmonisation of national spectrum policies envisaged in the draft Framework Directive and are unconvinced by the Commission’s assurances that references in the text to “general interest objectives” are an adequate protection for commercial broadcasters.

For the so-called “digital dividend”, the EU Commission should avoid a “one size fits all” policy which would not take into account the diversity in needs and objectives of Member States. And plans for frequency assignment and allotment of the broadcasting bands, agreed in Geneva in 2006, should be preserved”.

The existing regulatory framework has worked well, with good co-operation between the European Commission and Member States. In the interests of legal and operational certainty, we call on the European Parliament and Council of Ministers to clarify the ambiguities and complexities in the Commission package while respecting the right of Member States to regulate their very heterogeneous media markets.”

END

NOTES

ACT has member companies active in 34 European countries operating over 380 free-to-air and pay-tv channels and distributing 540 channels and 170 new services.

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