



European Radiocommunications Committee (ERC)  
within the European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administrations (CEPT)



## **HARMONISATION OF FREQUENCIES FOR POLICE AND SECURITY SERVICES IN EUROPE**

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Reports are being issued from time to time by the European Radiocommunications Committee (ERC) of CEPT to inform industry, operators, users and other interested parties of the work in hand, provisional conclusions and future activities in specific areas of radio frequency management. Such Reports give more details than is normally possible in a Recommendation and allow an opportunity for comment to be made on the work carried out so far. In most cases, it would be hoped that a formal CEPT Recommendation could be issued on the subject of the Report in due course, taking into consideration any comments received on the Report.

Reports are formally approved by, and issued in the name of, the Committee itself. In general the detailed preparation of Reports, and further work on the subject, will be done by Working Groups or Project Teams. Thus, any reference in the Reports to the ERC should be taken to include the whole framework of the ERC, including its Working Groups, Project Teams, etc.

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## HARMONISATION OF FREQUENCIES FOR POLICE AND SECURITY SERVICES IN EUROPE

### 1. BACKGROUND

The Schengen\* Working Party "Telecom" contacted the European Radiocommunications Committee (ERC) requesting that CEPT identify some harmonised spectrum for the exclusive use of the police and security services across Europe. Frequency bands identified by the Schengen Working Party were 415 MHz - 418 MHz and 425 MHz - 428 MHz with the aim of increasing these bands to 2 x 10 MHz in the future. CEPT was also asked to investigate the possibility of identifying duplex bands around 160 MHz and 900 MHz (in particular within the bands 870 MHz - 888 MHz and 915 MHz - 933 MHz). The bands would be required for terrestrial use, including aeronautical, with fixed and mobile systems. Further investigations revealed that the purpose of the requirement was to facilitate the "hot pursuit" of terrorists and criminals in border areas as well as the tracking of drug couriers, etc.

It became clear that other parties were also concerned with this issue, in particular the Trevi Committee which consists of representatives of the Home Affairs Departments of the 12 European Community countries. The Schengen Working Party "Telecom" was asked to provide details of the operational requirements of the police and security services and pointed out that this needed to be developed and co-ordinated with the Trevi Committee before CEPT could take the matter further. It was also pointed out that provision of exclusive spectrum in the 400 MHz and 900 MHz bands would be very difficult to achieve even with an initial request of the magnitude of 2 x 3 MHz, although it might be possible to identify a few common channels in some CEPT countries.

The Schengen Working Party contacted CEPT undertaking to provide details of frequencies used by the police, customs and security services in Schengen countries together with the technical characteristics and numbers of radio equipments used. It also indicated a fundamental change in the nature of Schengen's request to the CEPT. Reference was made to a technologically advanced common radio network that could be used by all EC countries. This clearly extended far beyond the original request for harmonised spectrum to be used in border areas. It also questioned whether the Schengen countries were considering the possibility of using an advanced PMR system such as MDTRS for all or part of their common network. It should be remembered, however, that the Schengen countries do not represent all EC countries. Nevertheless the European Commission have attached priority to this requirement.

### 2. CONSIDERATIONS

The Schengen Working Party has indicated that the priority is to identify a harmonised European frequency band for the Police/Security and Customs services. They recognise the difficulties involved with such a request and so would be prepared to allow a considerable period of time (perhaps around 20 years) to achieve such a result. The benefits to be obtained from a harmonised frequency band include economies of scale in equipment manufacture and interoperability between police/security forces.

The Schengen Working Party has also requested that the CEPT consider including in their request other civil protection organisations (such as fire and ambulance) and so create a harmonised European Emergency Services frequency band.

In some CEPT countries, however, the responsibility for Emergency Service spectrum is with a different Government Department to that responsible for civil spectrum. Additionally the different Emergency Services often have their own networks with different spectrum, different channelling arrangements and in some cases even reversed base and mobile transmit bands from other CEPT countries.

MDTRS has been suggested as a possible technology that could be used by the Emergency Services. It has also been suggested that the GSM system could be used to meet some of the requirements of the Emergency Services.

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\* The Schengen Treaty is agreed between police authorities in some European countries.

It was suggested that as most Administrations have spectrum allocated to the Emergency Services in the 80, 160 and 400 MHz bands there may be possibilities to find some common spectrum for some Administrations to begin the process of harmonisation although this would not fulfil the apparent requirement for a single common frequency band and would have implications for a common equipment standard.

Not all countries were of the opinion that the Emergency Services band should be made available exclusively to the Emergency Services. It was felt that provision should be made to allow Administrations to assign spectrum to private user groups if so permitted by the traffic demands of the Emergency Services.

It is a matter of concern that some Administrations are not party to the decision-making process in the Schengen Working Party and that perhaps a more appropriate forum for further discussion of the issue would be the Trevi Committee which represents all 12 European Community countries.

### 3. **CONCLUSIONS**

Following the receipt of details from the Schengen Working Party of the frequencies used by the Police/Security services in the Schengen countries, CEPT will consider extending the survey to the other CEPT countries in order to assess what potential there may be for harmonising frequency bands in at least some CEPT countries. Details of the operational requirements of the Police/Security services will also be needed so that an assessment can be made of the requirement for spectrum. CEPT is prepared to consider the request to include other civil protection organisations in a harmonised European Emergency Services band but would emphasise the difficulties involved in meeting such a request (see point 2, paragraph 3).