

**Press Release**  
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Post Box 68, D-91081 Baiersdorf, Germany  
[www.apwpt.org](http://www.apwpt.org) [info@apwpt.org](mailto:info@apwpt.org)

## **European Commission endangers cultural and creative industries and freedom of the press**

- In future, the frequency spectrum used for Programme Making and Special Events is to be used by the wireless broadband sector ("Digital Dividend 2")
- The proposed alternative frequencies designed to standardize systems throughout Europe are not adequate
- Media coverage of major sporting, cultural and media events will no longer be possible in its current form.
- Restrictions on live transmissions endanger the freedom of the press

**On September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014, the European Commission officially published the final report prepared by expert Pascal Lamy. The report included, amongst other things, recommendations for the future use of the UHF 694-790 MHz band. The entire band is heavily used throughout Europe for radio broadcasts as well as professional wireless productions (Programme Making and Special Events, PMSE). It is to be fully released for broadband use by about 2020. In return, Neelie Kroes, the European Commissioner responsible, announced that other frequency bands would be made available for wireless production tools (e.g. microphones and in-ear monitoring) and standardized throughout Europe. However, these alternative frequencies are grossly inadequate in terms of both quantity and quality. It therefore remains unclear which frequencies should be used in future. By issuing these recommendations, the European Commission is accepting the risk of serious damage to cultural and creative industries and to publicly fund cultural institutions which are not able to operate without wireless production equipment. In addition, this is tantamount to a restriction of press freedom: because of the drastic shortage of frequencies, it will no longer be possible in future for all camera and radio broadcast teams to report live from sporting, political, social or cultural events.**

"If the plans were to be implemented in their present form, then a valuable radio spectrum would be irretrievably lost and the consequence would be irreparable economic damage," said Norbert Hilbich, spokesman of the management board of APWPT. "Apart from that, all citizens and consumers will feel the negative consequences. First of all, it will affect events at which a large number of wireless channels are used at once, such as major festivals, musicals and TV shows. They will not be able to take place in their present form. Live reporting by journalists will also be severely restricted, for example at top games of the Champions League, major soccer events in general or national and state elections. Major international events such as the Eurovision Song contest or the Olympic Games will no longer be possible."

### **Germany's somewhat inflexible stand point exacerbates the problem**

"Unfortunately, Germany does not exert a significant influence on the European Commission but is on the contrary in the forefront of the drive to deprive event organizers and the press of this spectrum with undue haste," continued Hilbich. "Following the official statement of the European Commission on the publication of the Lamy Report, the auction in the frequency range 694-790 MHz to mobile broadband, the so-called 'Digital Dividend 2', has become a fait accompli – in contradiction of several express resolutions passed by the German Bundesrat who is in charge of Broadcast spectrum. One of the particularly influential driving forces is currently the German Federal Ministry of Transport."

### **No suitable alternative frequencies in sight**

If the 694-790 MHz band can no longer be used in future, neither the European Union nor, for example, Germany will be in a position to offer adequate alternative frequencies. According to Neelie Kroes, incumbent European Commissioner for the Digital Agenda, in future, the 823-832 MHz and 1785-1805 MHz bands will be made available for PMSE and standardized throughout Europe. However, these frequency bands offer very little space when compared to the previously very densely used bandwidths. From a point of view of quality, too, they are considerably inferior to 694-790 MHz band previously used: The 823-832 MHz band is a so-called duplex or mid gap between the frequencies already used in Germany for mobile broadband. Because of interference from LTE spurious emissions, it has so far been proven to be unsuitable for professional use, or only to a limited extent. In the 1785-1805 MHz band, interference is not yet to be expected in Germany, but the conditions there will result in a relatively poor propagation of radio waves. This is a disadvantage when long distances have to be covered or when the signal has to penetrate backstage areas or the performer's own body.

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The **Association of Professional Wireless** Production (APWPT) is an international non-profit organisation, which is representing the needs of all users of the Programme Making & Special Event ("PMSE") sector.

Members of APWPT include PMSE organisations, users and manufacturers. The APWPT directly and indirectly represents far over 25,000 members of the PMSE community in Europe and beyond. PMSE is crucial on a daily basis for the production of content that has received world-wide acclaim and continues to attract a global audience. A vast array of organisations are reliant on radio spectrum for the production of content for Performing Arts, Broadcasting, News Gathering, Independent Film and TV Production, Corporate Events, Concerts, Night Venues, Sports Events, Churches, etc. In addition, other sectors that utilise the current UHF spectrum include the Health Service, Education, Local Government, Political Programming and Conferencing.

For more information about the goals and achievements of the APWPT please visit our website at [www.apwpt.org](http://www.apwpt.org) or contact us at

Association of Professional Wireless Production Technologies e. V.  
Post Box 68  
D-91081 Baiersdorf  
Tel.: +49 (0) 9191 9790554  
Fax: +49 (0) 9191 9790553  
Email: [info@apwpt.org](mailto:info@apwpt.org)