

News Release

Dodging interference to avoid a Digital Deficit

EU announcement on digital switchover elicits a call from industry for further Member State inspection of newly identified interference for millions

(Brussels, 28 October 2009): Cable Europe has issued a call to Member States to carefully examine the Digital Dividend recommendation released by the European Commissioner today which lays out new uses for European spectrum that will be freed up in 2012 when analog television is switched off and re-used for new services. The industry association for broadband internet, television and telephony has signaled a call for action on the day of the European Commission's announcements to ensure Member State decision makers and technology authorities carefully assess the risks for the EU consumer posed by interference.

"Today's announcement marks a new era in connectivity for Europe. However, we have to be clear about the risks that are encountered by using new spectrum in the space of in-home consumer equipment found in millions of European homes that have experienced interference in laboratory testing carried out in EU countries including Austria, Germany and the United Kingdom," says Cable Europe Managing Director, Caroline Van Weede. "We've been in contact with the Commission on this and understand the need for moving closer to a single digital market and want to do our part to best help avoid any unnecessary fragmentation of EU rules especially for spectrum policy. Of course, spectrum is a Member State issue and the Commission's role in seeking to guide Member States is an important one. As this EU issue goes national, we are calling for careful national attention to this newly identified interference so that January 1st 2012 will be a cause for celebration rather than frustration."

In examining the Digital Dividend, Cable Europe has identified potential negative impact on consumer equipment and in-home network (TV and internet) that is caused directly by the release of spectrum between 790-862MHz for new mobile services. The discovery of this interference was made through laboratory testing carried out by Cable Europe members, as well as Cable Europe Labs and external independent testing.

"The interference issue is something that is new but we signaled it as soon as we were sure it was problematic so that we could quickly change from messenger to solution seeker on this," says Cable Europe Labs Managing Director, Malcolm Taylor. "We work so closely with the vendor community and other equipment manufacturers that this issue is already being looked at. Unfortunately this is not a problem limited to cable or its networks and will require a significant amount of further inspection at Member State level. The combination of both the real cost and opportunity cost of this interference makes a clear case for full impact analyses before any further decisions are made by national governments."

Interference identified in EU consumer equipment includes:

- TV sets
- Cable broadband modems
- Set Top Boxes
- PMSE (audio equipment used in live performances)
- Personal video recorders
- In-house wiring
- Gaming Consoles

Cable Europe has shared information on this potential interference with relevant EU and Member State authorities along with a request that the problems for TV viewers and broadband internet users are fully investigated prior to the allocation and auctions of the digital dividend frequencies to new usage such as new generation mobile services.



Cable Europe

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About Cable Europe

Cable Europe is a trade association that groups all leading broadband cable TV operators and their national associations throughout Europe. The aim of Cable Europe is to promote and defend the industry's policies and business interests at European and international levels, and to foster cooperation among its members. Cable networks go into the home of 73 million customers in the European Union, providing Digital TV, Broadband Internet and Telephony services.

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