



International Amateur Radio Union Region 1

Dublin, 17 July 2015

To all Member Societies in Region 1

Dear IARU Liaison Officer

LATEST SITUATION CONCERNING THE 4m BAND 69.9 – 70.5 MHz

As you may know, over the past 2 years IARU-R1 has been active in the Regional Regulatory Telecommunications Organisation for Europe (CEPT) to gain recognition in CEPT countries for an amateur frequency allocation in the vicinity of 70 MHz. This initiative was built on a 2009 national initiative by one CEPT administration in the Frequency Management Working Group (WGFM) of CEPT. Historically a band at 70/72 MHz was obtained in a small number of European countries as a replacement for the 56 MHz allocation which was lost in Region 1 in the late 1940s, in readiness for broadcasting band 1 (47 – 68 MHz) to be deployed in the 1950s for television broadcasting.

Nowadays, with the widespread closure of broadcasting below 87.5 MHz, the advent of cost effective globally available public mobile telecommunications networks and dedicated networks for emergency services operating above 400 MHz, the relatively large antennas required on hand-held devices, impulsive noise susceptibility and interference arising from sporadic E events in the summer months, the use of spectrum below 100 MHz has become increasingly unattractive for private/professional/business mobile communications. In addition it was noted that some National Regulatory Authorities required an internationally acceptable regulatory basis for proceeding, before they would consider releasing a band to the amateur service, which does not feature in the current version of Article 5 of the ITU Radio Regulations.

Based on the foregoing, IARU-R1 made a formal proposal together with a number of CEPT administrations to CEPT WGFM to modify the European Common frequency Allocation table (ECA) to include a secondary allocation to the amateur service in the range 69.9 – 70.5 MHz. In addition footnote EU9 was included in the 2015 ECA which reads, "EU9 - CEPT administrations may authorise all or parts of the band 69.9-70.5 MHz to the amateur service on a secondary basis." This was finally approved by WGFM earlier this year and CEPT's Electronic Communications Committee authorised the publication of the 2015 ECA in July 2015.

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However implementing the ECA is not mandatory on CEPT administrations. On the other hand the ECA can provide a regulatory mechanism for introducing all or parts of the band 69.9 – 70.5 MHz by any CEPT member administration. In practise the current smallest allocation is 25 kHz and the largest is 500 kHz. Member Societies in CEPT countries, which do not have access to the 4m band may therefore wish to lobby their regulatory authority (again) on the basis of the 2015 ECA, as mentioned above.

It is not only European countries in Region 1 which have access to the 4m band. In addition to some non European territories in R1, R2 and R3 for which CEPT administrations having access to the 4m band are responsible, the Gulf States of the Kingdom of Bahrain (A9) and the United Arab Emirates (A6) have access to the band, although currently the band only features in the UAE club station licence. In Africa, amateurs in Namibia, Somalia and South Africa can operate in the 4m band. Indeed 70 MHz QSOs have already occurred between Europe and southern African countries and between the UK and Bahrain. The current distance records for trans-equatorial and sporadic E propagation are 7682 km and 5234km respectively.

I hope this letter has shown that the 4m band has exciting possibilities for studying VHF propagation and that the band is not limited to providing local communications. Since CEPT has incorporated a secondary allocation into their ECA (frequency table) this may be considered by any Member Society as a basis for seeking a 4m allocation, especially if the national frequency plan or table in their country is similar to the European ECA.

Although the IARU-R1 initiative has been concluded with the inclusion of the 70 MHz band in the ECA, IARU-R1 remains ready to help any Member Society obtain access to spectrum in the vicinity of 70 MHz

Best wishes and kindest regards

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Court" with a stylized flourish underneath.

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Member R1 Executive Committee

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