[AT] Mobile Networks to Receive Digital Dividend from 2013 and Must Share GSM Bands

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The radio spectrum allocated to mobile communication networks in Austria is being reorganised. This process will also have an impact on terrestrial broadcasting: from 31 October 2013, the “mobile radio communication service” (except the aeronautical mobile service) will be the only primary user of the UHF band frequencies (790-862 MHz, so-called “digital dividend”) freed up as a result of television digitisation. It is already using these frequencies on a co-primary basis, i.e., with the same rights as broadcasting. This is set out in the amended Annex 1 to the amended Frequenzbereichzuweisungsverordnung (Decree on the allocation of frequency bands - FBZV), which the Austrian Infrastrukturministerium (Ministry of Infrastructure - BMVIT) published on 24 February 2011.

The decree defines the mobile radio communication service as not only “terrestrial systems capable of providing electronic communication services” (commonly known as “mobile communication networks”), but also broadcasting services such as wireless microphones or other professional programme production devices (programme making and special events, PMSE). From 2012, the latter will only be allocated frequencies in the 821-832 MHz band. The remaining spectrum (791-821 MHz and 832-862 MHz) will be allocated to “normal” mobile communication networks, although the number of allocations will be limited in accordance with the Annexe to the Frequenznutzungsverordnung (Decree on frequency use - FNV), which has also been amended.

At the same time, the Annexe to the FNV states, in conformity with the amended GSM Directive, that the 900 and 1800 MHz frequency bands, previously allocated to GSM services, will in future be available for use by “terrestrial systems capable of providing Europe-wide electronic communication services”. This means that these frequency bands, which were previously limited to the GSM standard, will have a broader range of possible uses. It may also soon be possible to use UMTS technology in these bands.

Rundfunk & Telekom Regulierungs-GmbH (RTR), which is conducting the process on behalf of the Telekom-Control-Kommission, the relevant regulatory body, has already launched a consultation on this subject. In its consultation document, it recommends an early auction of the 900 MHz band and the reallocation of frequencies after the digital dividend is allocated. Since this is impossible in the 1800 MHz band due to the fact that some licences still have a long time to run,

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the situation here should be reassessed in due course. Responses to the document had to be submitted by 18 March 2011.

Geänderte Anlage zur FZBV

https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblAuth/BGBLA_2011_II_68/COO_2026_100_2_656830.pdf

Amended Annex to the FZBV

Geänderte Anlage zur FNV

https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblAuth/BGBLA_2011_II_67/COO_2026_100_2_656827.pdf

Amended Annex to the FNV

Konsultationsdokument der RTR

http://www.rtr.at/de/komp/Konsult_DD_Refarming/Konsultation_DD_Refarming.pdf

RTR consultation document

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