[ES] New Plan to Promote DTT and Technological Innovation

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Trinidad García Leiva
Universidad Carlos III, Madrid

On 24 August 2012 the Council of Ministers approved a plan, entitled Plan de Impulso de la TDT y de la Innovación Tecnológica (Promotion Plan for DTT and technological innovation), which aims to support high definition television and 4G mobile broadband services but which will also affect DTT services.

Since the switch-off of analogue terrestrial television took place in April 2010 in Spain (see IRIS 2010-6/24), it was decided that the frequencies to be released, best known as the digital dividend, would be mainly dedicated to the provision of 4G services. Nevertheless, the allocation of television services to band 470-790 MHz (channels 21 to 60), in order to free up subband 790-862 MHz (channels 61 to 69) for other uses by 1 January 2015 (see IRIS 2010-6/25), has been a matter of negotiation between the government and national commercial broadcasters. The reason was that, in a context of an economic crisis, whereas the government was interested in taking advantage of those new telecommunication services that are supposed to be helpful in boosting the economy, national commercial broadcasters requested financial support for the switch to different frequencies.

The Spanish government and broadcasters, gathered around the commercial TV association UTECA (Unión de Televisiones Comerciales Asociadas), have finally reached an agreement which is, in fact, at the heart of the approved plan. Although the text has not yet been released to the public, the Council of Ministers has announced that the digital dividend will be cleared by January 2014 and that high-definition DTT services will be strengthened at the same time as the number of DTT frequencies available will be reduced.

Following this recent agreement, a new DTT technical plan is therefore set to be approved soon. The new allocation map for DTT services would be as follows: national commercial broadcasters will share capacity across five multiplexes instead of six, as was originally planned; the national public service broadcaster, RTVE, will reduce its capacity from two multiplexes to one; and it is expected that regional public service broadcasters will do the same. As a consequence of this reduction in their DTT capacity, national commercial broadcasters will offer four standard-definition and one high-definition services.

National commercial broadcasters that were in place when the current DTT frequency plan was decided (Antena 3, Telecinco, La Sexta, Cuatro, Net TV and

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Veo TV) have now gone through a concentration process. While Telecinco and Cuatro had merged by the end of 2010 (see IRIS 2011-1/25), the Council of Ministers authorized the acquisition of La Sexta by Antena 3 (see IRIS 2012-8/21) during the meeting; it also approved the above-mentioned Plan to promote DTT.

Referencia del Consejo de Ministros de 24 de agosto de 2012

http://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/NR/rdonlyres/EEF65741-3DAB-40E5-B7D6-D9C4553CEFBA/211352/refc20120824.pdf

Council of Ministers meeting of 24 August 2012

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