

## SPECTRUM FRAMEWORK REVIEW

I write as a radio amateur who was first licensed in 1948. My comments are limited to the position of the licensed amateur services in relation to the Spectrum Framework Review.

Although there may well be areas of the spectrum where deregulation is both possible and desirable, the scope for it in the segments used by the licensed amateur services is limited by the ITU Radio Regulations, to which the United Kingdom subscribes and which were last enacted at the World Radiocommunication Conference in Geneva in July 2003. Insofar as the amateur services are concerned, the Regulations allocate spectrum within which the administrations of the member countries of the ITU may license amateur stations to operate, and Article 25 sets out a number of principles governing those licences.

In particular, from Ofcom's point of view, this Article provides *inter alia* that "all pertinent Articles and Provisions of the Constitution, the Convention and of these Regulations shall apply to amateur stations"; "administrations shall verify the operational and technical qualifications of any person wishing to operate an amateur station"; "the maximum power of amateur stations shall be fixed by the administrations concerned"; "during the course of their transmissions, amateur stations shall transmit their call sign at intervals"; "administrations are encouraged to take the necessary steps to allow amateur stations to prepare for and meet communication needs in support of disaster relief; and "administrations may determine whether or not to permit a person who has been granted a licence to operate an amateur station by another administration, to operate an amateur station while that person is temporarily in its territory, subject to such conditions or restrictions as it may impose".

It is apparent from this that the UK Government is prevented by international agreement from unilaterally abolishing the licensing requirement for radio amateurs, including the issuing of call signs and the verification of technical competence, and from reallocating the spectrum enjoyed by the amateur services to users not permitted by the Regulations. The Government could presumably delegate the day-to-day administration of its responsibilities under the Regulations to an agency such as the RSGB in place of Ofcom, while reserving to itself the legal power of enforcement. As a last resort the Government could cancel all amateur licences in the United Kingdom, in which event ITU Regulations would prevent UK amateurs from using that spectrum at all, but it seems inconceivable that the present Review would recommend such a course. It would be bound to have international as well as domestic repercussions.

The next World Radiocommunication Conference is likely to be held in 2007, when the United Kingdom could seek to negotiate amendments to the ITU Radio Regulations. However, if such amendments would seriously compromise the international scope and structure of amateur radio they would certainly be opposed by the International Amateur Radio Union (IARU) and would stand no chance of being adopted if not supported by countries with a strong tradition of amateur radio, among which must be numbered the United States of America.

The history and merits of amateur radio, and its inherent professionalism as compared with Citizens' Band, have doubtless been represented to you by others and I need not repeat them here. I trust that from the breadth and range of these responses you will have a better understanding of the purpose and significance of the amateur services and that this will be fully reflected in your final Report.