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Public consultation relating to amateur radiocommunications
for emergency situations

September 2017

I. Purpose of the consultation

The public consultation initiated by this document is aimed at collecting the views of all interested parties, including the radioamateur community and entities with responsibilities in emergency situations, with respect to the exploration and the identification of general principles and specific methods for laying down and improving the necessary regulations and procedures for managing the radio spectrum required for the continued operation of the amateur service dedicated to the provision of communications in emergency situations.

The opinions expressed on the occasion of this consultation will be used for grounding the regulatory strategy of the National Authority for Management and Regulation in Communications (ANCOM) for supporting amateur radio activities dedicated to ensuring communications in emergency situations.

Considering the importance of the measures to be taken, ANCOM deems useful consulting all parties concerned, with the aim of ensuring transparency and fairness in the decision-making process and predictability in the adopted rules.

II. Brief history and current status of the amateur radiocommunications for emergency situations

After the World Radiocommunications Conference 2003 (WRC-03), article 25 of the Radio Regulations of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) has been amended by the introduction of paragraph 25.3A, stating that "*Administrations are encouraged to take the necessary steps to allow amateur stations to prepare for and meet communication needs in support of disaster relief.*"

Thus, the WRC recognized the possibility for ITU Member States to take the necessary measures at national level so that, in certain emergency situations, the radio spectrum resource already allocated to the amateur service could be used for meeting the current needs in order to mitigate the effects of an emergency situation or for enabling the coordination required in such a situation.

At national level, the legal framework applicable to the amateur service is based on Article 32 of the Government Emergency Ordinance no. 111/2011 on electronic communications, approved, with amendments and completions, by Law no. 140/2012, as amended and completed, and ANCOM President's decision No. 245/2017 on regulating the amateur service. The normative act adopted by the regulatory authority in the field of electronic communication establishes, under point 21 of Chapter IV - "*Rules for using radio stations*" – in Annex –, the possibility for the radioamateurs to participate or contribute to restoring normality in the event of an emergency. Therefore, the indicated text recognizes that radioamateurs may get actively involved in supporting the competent authorities, making use of all the possibilities and competences available to them.

At international level, regulatory authorities have initiated and allowed the development of national networks of amateur radio for emergency situations, and examples in this respect are numerous: RAYNET (United Kingdom), ARES and RACES (United States of America), AREC (New Zealand), DARES (The Netherlands), AREN (Ireland), ARENA (Austria), WICEN (Australia), ARES (Canada), REMER (Spain) and RAS (Russia). A good regulatory model was offered by the FCC and FEMA from the United States of America.

Last but not least, the International Amateur Radio Union (IARU), released, in 2016, a guidebook for emergency communications. The document gives practical details regarding the setup of amateur radio networks for emergency situations. It should be noted that the IARU features a section dedicated to communications in emergency situations, providing information on the radio frequencies that can be used for reporting the occurrence of such a situation and for contacting national networks designed for such emergency calls.

III. Questionnaire relating to amateur radiocommunications for emergency situations

Respondent name (for legal entities)	
Contact person	
Contact e-mail address	
Field of activity	

1. *Involvement of the amateur service in emergency situations*

To what extent do you think the amateur service should be involved in case of emergency situations? How could this involvement be achieved?

Please give details and reasoning for your opinion.

2. *Organization structure of the amateur service in emergency situations*

How would you define the organization structure of the amateur service in order to be up to the challenges in emergency situations?

Please give details and reasoning for your opinion, proposing organisation structures and schemes.

3. *National experience concerning the amateur service in emergency situations*

Considering the experience of cooperation between radioamateurs' organizations in Romania and the public institutions with competences for emergency situations, please state what has been done and what would need to be further enhanced? Do you deem useful prior affiliation to certain institutions in charge of coordinating/ensuring emergency communications, within the framework of voluntary permanent groups/networks set up by field of competence/availability?

Please give reasoning for your reply.

4. *International experience concerning the amateur service in emergency situations*

Please give one or more examples of international experience and how best practices might be implemented. Considering other countries' experience of organizing the amateur service, please indicate which model would be recommendable for implementation in Romania?

Give one or more examples of international experience and suggest a manner of implementation.

5. *Steps that may be taken by ANCOM*

Please indicate the steps you think should be implemented for creating and improving the necessary regulations and the procedure of managing the radio spectrum for fostering

radioamateur activities dedicated to the provision of communications in emergency situations.

Please give reasoning for your reply.

6. Exploring and identifying the general regulatory principles

Please summarize the general principles envisaged for defining the amateur service for emergency situations, as well as the key elements of such an activity.

Please detail the enumerated strategic principles.

7. Exploring and identifying specific methods of enforcing the rules

Please specify what mechanisms are best suited for determining radioamateurs to participate and be involved in supporting national authorities in emergency situations? How do you think that the effectiveness of the regulation could be assessed and what would be the factors involved?

Please detail each method presented.

8. Defining dedicated radio spectrum resources

Do you consider it useful to dedicate some radio channels of the amateur service exclusively to the involvement of radioamateurs in emergency situations? Please give examples of such channels, including bands of frequencies. You may also include data such as: frequencies, bandwidths, emission symbols and working procedures. Do you deem useful to standardize/render compatible the equipment used by radio amateurs and their working methods in emergency situations? Please provide examples of such equipment.

Please give reasoning for each of your proposals.

9. Working procedures in emergency situations

Do you deem that special procedures should be defined for using the radio channels dedicated to emergency situations? In your opinion, what institutions could undertake responsibility for the log in, processing, sending and coordinating in respect of the information and requests provided by such channels? How could such procedures be taught or learned?

Please give reasoning for your proposal.

10. Further extending the scope of the consultation

What other topics do you think should be subsequently discussed regarding the amateur service for emergency situations? What further questions do you think would arise from these issues and should be considered in a future public consultation?

Please give reasoning for your proposal.