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DIF responds to calls for a single technical protection standard for Mobile TV

The Digital Interoperability Forum (DIF)^{*}, which includes some of the foremost players in Europe's emerging Mobile TV industry, including leading content providers, would like to express its concern at the recent views expressed by the European Commission on the need for mandating an open standard for service/content protection systems for mobile use, as the EU moves towards full implementation of its mobile broadcasting strategy.

DIF agrees with the Commission that the emerging EU market of Mobile TV, terrestrial and by satellite, has potential for significant growth, jobs and innovation and could bring significant consumer benefits, and is committed to maintaining Europe's lead in all forms of digital television services.

DIF agrees with the Commission that the technology used in the service and other layers will play a critical role in defining and supporting the content and capabilities available on a given platform.

However, DIF will continue to support the need for a technology-neutral regulatory stance to foster growth and investment in Mobile TV, despite the recent mandating of DVB-H standard at the transmission layer. Doing this at the service layer poses greater risks and could affect future innovations by conditional access technology players to help curtail the growing dangers of digital copying and piracy.

While some DIF members will choose specific technical protection standards such as to meet their needs, DIF is opposed to the mandating of any specific standard given the diversity in market characteristics, and the personal nature of Mobile TV services.

When using the same transmission technology, different markets may choose different, non-interchangeable, service layers to meet legitimate needs. For example, both DVB-IPDC and OMA BCAST protocols are in use with DVB-H transmissions in Europe, and each of these protocols has a choice of incompatible sub-options for Service Purchase Protection. As with the transmission layer, stakeholders must retain the ability to **select the most appropriate technology in other layers to meet their business objectives**. A complete Mobile TV platform will necessarily involve several specifications beyond the transmission standard. We believe it is important for all parties to understand the relationship and distinctions between various specifications, including any IPR issues, before taking a decision.

The current threat to impose a single technical approach is therefore not recommended, and any outcome in favour of a single service/content protection system could be detrimental to the competitiveness of the European mobile TV sector from a security and innovation standpoint. While DIF understands the desire of regulators to accelerate the take-up of Mobile TV, we do not believe it is possible to do so by imposing an arbitrary technology or timescale. DIF believes that the full potential of Mobile TV will only be realized through industry-led initiatives that encourage the sustained investment, competition and innovation needed to develop and promote a vibrant mobile TV industry in Europe.

^{*} DIF members are: Advanced Digital Broadcast, Arqiva, BSkyB, Canal+, Deutsche Telekom, Liberty Global, Microsoft TV, Nagravision, NDS, Pace Micro Technology, Premiere, Qualcomm, Samsung, Sky Italia, TF1, Virgin Media and ZetaCast.

About DIF

The members of DIF have driven the advance of digital TV and HDTV in Europe through the collective investment of billions of euros. They have helped to set technical standards and have made digital TV a reality through a combination of satellite, cable and terrestrial platforms, as well as broadband, mobile and fixed telephone connections.

Through its significant experience and investments in deploying digital television services, DIF understands that the methods as well as the goals of government policy can have a profound effect on market development. Consequently, DIF has always urged the avoidance of policies or regulation that foreclose the introduction of new business models, services or technical approaches now or in the future.

DIF does not believe that supporting a single technical protection standard for mobile TV will make the content industry wary about providing mobile TV services with their best offerings, whereas successful mobile TV offers require the coexistence of free and protected content and will make no difference in ensuring that commercial and technological solutions that make digital and interactive television services accessible to the largest number of people on the widest choice of platforms.