

6 August 2004
D/5118

Dear Mr. Bräutigam and Mr. Schmitz,

Thank you for your letter dated 23 June 2004 to President Prodi and to Commissioner Liikanen in which you reiterate your concerns about interference caused by Powerline Communications (PLC). Given recent changes in the College of Commissioners this letter has been passed to me to provide a response.

In his answer to your letter dated 14 January 2004, Commissioner Liikanen indicated the need to support the achievement of the Lisbon objectives by encouraging alternate infrastructures for the provision of broadband services. Such networks must of course be compliant with Community legislation.

In this respect, I would like to clarify a possible misunderstanding about the position of the Commission on Power Line Communications. Our policy is to have a cautious and controlled approach to the introduction of new broadband wireline technologies which is transparent, non-discriminatory and proportionate. Therefore new technologies such as PLC must be given the possibility to prove their viability by demonstrating the capability to exist alongside radio services, whilst ensuring that the legitimate interests of radio amateurs or other spectrum users are preserved.

As you mention PLC technology is not yet widely deployed, and the market has yet to decide on its adoption as a commercial technology. We can therefore benefit from the early stages of its deployment so as to gather hard data on unwanted emissions and harmful interference in a systematic and objective manner. Only the analysis of these facts will allow us to draw definitive conclusions as to whether PLC technology is harmless, if the interferences it creates can be managed locally or if this technology would really be incompatible with shortwave radio reception.

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To this effect, the Commission is currently preparing a Recommendation that will encourage the introduction of PLC following the above approach together with regular monitoring and reporting by Member States. The Recommendation will emphasise the obligation of compliance of PLC equipment and networks with the EMC Directive and the need to resolve any interference problems. It will also encourage regular monitoring and reporting by member States. The Recommendation will thus ensure both a fair and even application of the EMC Directive and help with the gathering of data necessary to develop a European harmonised standard for networks.

Yours sincerely,


Poul Nielson



Ján FIGEL