



International Amateur Radio Union Region 1 VHF - UHF - MW Newsletter

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Chairman Report Cavtat

For three years now, I have had the pleasure to serve as a chairman - an interesting position, indeed. I herewith take the opportunity to thank all my co-workers for their valuable help. There are, however, three subjects outside the agenda of the C5 Committee that strongly influence our work and must be addressed. These are:

- International Regulations,
- Responsiveness of IARU Region 1
- Recruitment

Amateur radio is strongly influenced by European politics. New regulations are introduced by centralised bodies to permit the industry to cut their costs. We also notice that economic considerations prevail over technical common sense - otherwise the decision to support PLC with millions of Euros could not have been taken. Although we do have excellent people who work for IARU in various committees, IARU needs a permanent representative to cover all subjects that have a bearing on Amateur Radio. This task goes well beyond the capabilities of a part-timer, and therefore I urge you to establish and finance the position of a full-time employee who can be active in all the relevant fora. The person we are seeking does not necessarily have to be a top-notch technician; he or she ought to be of an extrovert nature and be capable of lobbying for our cause. The financing of such a post should be possible through our budget and with the help of other projects. We must, however, be courageous enough to take this step.

To organise conferences only every three years makes us increasingly inflexible. Here, too, we must be courageous enough to take a bold step and introduce changes. An interval of two years leads to a considerable cost increase. Cavtat, in particular, shows a low number of registrations. It is very important to make sure that conferences are held in central regions near large international airports, that the conference schedule is as tight as possible, and that the time required for ground transport time between the airport and the conference venue does not exceed 30 minutes, so that expenditures can be kept to a minimum.

Another subject that is also a topic in the VHF bands is the current lack of newcomers. The Internet does not bring about the death of amateur radio - it rather enriches amateur radio. We must spread the fascination of amateur radio now, otherwise structural problems in IARU and all its member societies are inevitable.

As I see it, the task of the C5 Committee is to regulate and support activities in the VHF bands through attractive contests, propagation studies, activities for data collection to support such studies, and to work out bandplans that lead us into the future. The introduction of digitised audio, which ever way it may happen, will change our VHF bands in a way similar to the transition from AM to FM.

Unfortunately, I have not been able to establish an automated evaluation system for contests. We do, however, have some excellent initiatives in this direction. Detailed evaluation is already possible, but a permanent and IARU-approved solution has not yet been found. As the swift processing of contest data makes contests more attractive to participants, and thus increases their numbers, I am pressing hard towards this end.

As mentioned before, the introduction of D-Star is in full swing. I, too, use D-Star with its manifold possibilities, but this system also has its weaknesses, which must be considered in band planning. D-Star represents the first generation of digital voice communication, and further versions are to follow. Digital technology is software driven, which means that generations will change much faster than before. Hardware should be equipped with fast DSPs to permit simple software updates for new modulation schemes. In this way, operators do not need to buy new hardware in case of a system change, which in turn leads to shorter development cycles and thus faster changes in the digital domain.

The VHF Manger Handbook already provides a good starting point with respect to the where and the how. Both the operational requirements and the bandplan are well documented. As already discussed in Vienna, the handbook must be updated and adapted as required. To do this, we need co-workers to take on a small section each, so that we can compile a large compendium.

As already pointed out in previous newsletters, I consider propagation management an important link to scientific research, where amateur radio operators can make valuable contributions through their activities and experiments, and, in turn, also can receive important information. My hopes to resuscitate this project did not come true because the person I would have liked to take on this task is overworked and simply does not have enough spare time for such activities. I herewith call on you to nominate a suitable candidate for this position, as we are looking for a person who can build a bridge between science and amateur radio.

Unique QSOs and the contest rules have also stirred up discussions. I do, however, expect fruitful discussions to find a solution that is a compromise everybody can live with.

With respect to the shifting of the 144MHz EME Segment up to 144.100 MHz, I have contacted the other regions, and expect one more reply and some more information, so that this matter can be referred to a Sub Working Group.

I am looking forward to meeting all of you at Cavtat for fruitful discussions.

Michael Kastelic, OE1MCU

2008 IARU Conference, to be held at Cavtat (Croatia), 14. - 22. November 2008