



International Amateur Radio Union Region 1

Europe, Middle East, Africa and Northern Asia
Founded 1950

IARU R1 PRC office: POBox 23459, 1683 Nicosia, Cyprus
Tel: +357 99610855 email: nestor.jacovides@gmail.com

EC Call for Evidence:

Subject: Activation of EU rules on radio equipment for reconfigurable radio systems

EC proposal:

This Call for Evidence, published on April 29, 2025, concerns the "Activation of EU rules on radio equipment for reconfigurable radio systems". It outlines the European Commission's plan to activate dormant provisions of the **Radio Equipment Directive (RED) 2014/53/EU** to ensure that software updates do not compromise a device's safety or its efficient use of the radio spectrum.

Document Summary

The initiative addresses the shift from hardwired radio characteristics to those defined by software. Because software can be updated after a product is placed on the market, there is a risk that these changes—whether accidental or intentional—could lead to harmful interference with radiocommunication services or render the device unsafe. The Commission aims to use **Article 3(3)(i)** and **Article 4** of the RED to ensure that only compliant software can be loaded onto specified classes of radio equipment.

Key points include:

- **Target:** Manufacturers, importers, and specialized communities that provide firmware or software updates.
- **Timeline:** The initiative is expected to result in a Commission Delegated Regulation by **Q2 2026**.
- **Scope:** While the general public is not directly involved, the rules will affect how manufacturers manage software to prevent interference.

Objectives and Policy Options

The core objective is to ensure that reconfigurable radio systems remain compliant with the RED after software is installed or updated. The document explores the following policy options:

Option 1: Business as Usual (Baseline)

- No new EU rules would be activated.
- Compliance would continue to rely on existing market surveillance and voluntary measures by manufacturers.
- Stakeholders (such as Bitkom) have argued that existing measures are sufficient and that further regulation may be redundant.

Option 2: Activation of Article 3(3)(i)

- This option mandates that radio equipment must be constructed to ensure that **only compliant software** can be loaded.
- Manufacturers would be required to implement technical features (e.g., secure boot or software signing) to verify that the combination of hardware and software remains within regulatory limits.

Option 3: Activation of Article 4

- This option focuses on transparency and information sharing.
- Manufacturers and software providers would be required to provide information to users and authorities regarding the **compliance of intended combinations** of radio equipment and software.
- This aims to clarify liability between hardware and software vendors, particularly in "horizontal markets" where third-party software is used.

Option 4: Combined Activation

- A hybrid approach where both Article 3(3)(i) and Article 4 are activated simultaneously.
- This would combine technical safeguards (locking down software loading) with administrative requirements (providing compliance data).

IARU Region 1 Response:

We acknowledge the importance of ensuring that radio equipment complies with the Radio Equipment Directive (RED) throughout its lifecycle, particularly to prevent harmful interference and maintain safety. Considering the unique role of amateur radio as a non-commercial, experimental, and educational service, this initiative risks inadvertently capturing amateur radio equipment under the same compliance framework as commercial products. Unlike mass-market devices, amateur radio operates under strict operator licensing (including frequency and power restrictions), which already mitigates interference risks. We therefore recommend option 0 or 1.