

German microphone users protest against new frequency allocation

Wedemark, 17 September 2007 – Today, more than one million wireless microphones are in use in Germany alone. Without them and the freedom of movement they provide, it would be hard to imagine the spectacular stage shows, musicals, concerts, plays, live reports and sports events we currently enjoy. Yet their future is threatened, because the UHF frequencies they use for transmission have become a target for the financially strong telecommunications companies, who want to buy the spectrum for wireless services such as DVB-H and wireless Internet. On 5 September 2007 the German Electrical Industry Association (ZVEI) organised a conference that focused on wireless microphones as secondary users of the RF spectrum. Broadcast and event industries hope this conference will be another step towards safeguarding the availability of transmission frequencies for wireless microphones.

The ZVEI convention was attended by representatives from Germany's most important user groups: the Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology, the Federal Network Agency, public broadcasters ARD and ZDF, the State Media Authorities of broadcasters BR, HR, RBB, NDR and WDR, the Broadcast Technology Institute (IRT), private radio and TV producers, the German Tonmeister Association (VDT), the Professional Lighting and Sound Association of Germany (VPLT) and many more. Also present were universities, the press, production companies, rental companies and manufacturers of wireless microphone systems.

„Wireless microphones have already lost valuable spectrum because of the introduction of digital terrestrial TV,“ explained Volker Bartels, Speaker for the Executive Team of audio and RF wireless specialists Sennheiser. “If the plans for a further sell-off of the frequency spectrum become reality, professional users, broadcasters and public institutions will have to face a flood of new investments, as their existing systems will not be usable any more. If the worst comes to the worst, we would have to resort to cabled microphones, which is unimaginable for stage shows, musicals and live reports.”

Once again, the conference participants underlined that wireless microphones are an indispensable front-end for today's media productions. Every day, a multitude of cultural events are made possible by wireless technology, stage shows, music events, newscasts and live documentaries, all of which of course are important economic factors in our society. All representatives called for a spectrum guarantee to ensure the continued operation of existing wireless microphones, wireless monitoring systems and talkback systems. Additionally it was agreed that the spectrum planning should cater for the major improvements in audio transmission quality that new formats such as HDTV will bring.

During the conference, a joint declaration was adopted to give politicians enough facts and arguments for securing sufficient frequency spectrum. "Having reached a consensus for all user groups and calling for the governments to take our demands into consideration, is an important step towards saving transmission frequencies," declared Volker Bartels. "By acting together, it will be easier to reach our common goal."

In November, Geneva will host the World Radio Conference, which will be discussing worldwide frequency allocation – the ZVEI's position will be part of the debate.

The Sennheiser Group is one of the world's leading manufacturers of microphones, headphones and wireless transmission systems. A family firm established in 1945 and based in Wedemark near Hanover, the company recorded sales of over 356 million euros in 2006, 82% of which was generated abroad. Sennheiser employs over 1,800 people worldwide, around 55% of whom are in Germany. Sennheiser has manufacturing plants in Germany, Ireland and the USA and is represented worldwide by subsidiaries in France, Great Britain, Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark (Nordic), Russia, Hong Kong, India, Singapore, Canada, Mexico and the USA, as well as through long-term trading partners in other countries. Also part of the Sennheiser Group are Georg Neumann GmbH, Berlin (studio microphones), K + H Vertriebs- und Entwicklungsgesellschaft mbH (Klein + Hummel studio monitors, installed sound) and the joint venture Sennheiser Communications A/S (headsets for PCs, offices and call centres).

You can find out the latest information on Sennheiser by visiting www.sennheiser.com or by contacting:

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