



International Amateur Radio Union Region 1

Interim Meeting – Vienna Austria

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Subject: FT8 use in contest

Committee(s): C5

Background

The growth of FT8 activity seems endless on all HF bands and we have seen that during the last spring/summer also on 50 MHz all the activity was focused mainly on FT8 mode, despite propagation conditions were good enough to complete contacts also on traditional modes like CW or Phone.

FT8 was born for weak Tropo-scatter or multi-hop sporadic E qso's, but now it seems that is used for any kind of contacts, even for some meteor scatter qso's. This behaviour, maybe due to the curiosity toward a new mode or maybe due to generally poor propagation conditions, has been observed also by our regulators that in CEPT meetings sent a report about our band usage on 6m, where they underline that amateur radio activity is focused mainly around 50,313 MHz, only during some contest weekends they noted a different use of the band with signals spread on the first 200 kHz.

FT8 activity is growing now also on 2m band around 144,174 MHz.

Proposal

Contest days are the periods where we have the highest activity on the amateur bands and in particular on VHF and higher bands.

At that time there is a concentration of activity that you can't find on other days so it is the period with more possibilities to make excellent qsos due to the presence of well equipped stations taking part to the contest in a competitive manner.

Then, it is important to use all the available band and if we allow FT8 qsos also during contest, we will see an increase of this mode against traditional ones (already happened on Italian Activity Contest 2018 on 6m), and soon we would see a use of only 3 kHz of the bands.

We should keep in mind that we need to protect our bands and the only realistic way is to use all of them (Use them, or lose them!).

During last ARI VHF Meeting in October it has been decided that all FT8 contacts will not be allowed on any ARI contest on all VHF and higher bands.

We propose not to allow FT8 mode on any IARU R1 contests, and we don't encourage the use of it.