



Radiocommunication Bureau (BR)

Administrative Circular
CACE/730

5 June 2015

To Administrations of Member States of the ITU and Radiocommunication Sector Members

Subject: **Notification of 30 June 2015 Leap Second**

Determination and dissemination of the international time scale is one important element that is necessary for the proper functioning of telecommunication systems. The international time scale known as Coordinated Universal Time (UTC) is an atomic time scale broadcast throughout the world. UTC is defined by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in Recommendation ITU-R TF.460-6 and is maintained by the International Bureau of Weights and Measures (BIPM) in cooperation with the International Earth Rotation and Reference Systems Service (IERS). Contributed measurements from timing centers around the world are used in the determination of UTC, which is adjusted to within 0.9 s to Earth rotation time (UT1) by IERS-determined values of the Earth rotation angle. The adjustments, made in one second steps known as leap seconds, were first implemented in 1972 to permit UT1 to be recovered from broadcast values of UTC for celestial navigation. Deliberations have been ongoing within the ITU-R on the issue of modifying the definition of UTC to a continuous time scale.

The issue of *considerating the feasibility of achieving a continuous reference time-scale, whether by the modification of coordinated universal time (UTC) or some other method* is on the agenda of the World Radiocommunication Conference in November 2015. A primary issue is whether to make UTC a continuous time scale rather than the stepped atomic time scale that it is used now or to use some other method. At its recent meeting on 26th May 2015, ITU-R Study Group 7 (Science services) noted that an opportunity for further understanding of the issue will be provided at the upcoming insertion of a leap second on 30 June 2015 (UTC).

ITU-R Study Group 7 requested that I bring this fact to your attention and to the attention of those organizations concerned listed in the Annex in the event that this may aid your deliberation of the issue at the upcoming World Radiocommunication Conference.



François Rancy
Director

Annex: 1

Distribution:

- Administrations of Member States of the ITU and Radiocommunication Sector Members
- Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Radiocommunication Study Groups and Special Committee on **Regulatory/Procedural Matters**
- Chairman and Vice-Chairmen of the Conference Preparatory Meeting
- Secretary-General of the ITU, Director of the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau, Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau
- Organizations listed in the Annex

Annex

Additional distribution list

Bureau International des Poids et Mesures

Consultative Committee for Time and Frequency (CCTF)

IUGG - Bureau Gravimetrique International

International Astronomical Union (IAU)

Committee on Space Research (COSPAR)

International Union of Radio Science (URSI)

International Earth Rotation and Reference Systems Service (IERS)

Galileo programme - ESA Headquarters

International Union of Pure and Applied Physics (IUPAP)

IGEB Executive Secretariat

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