



Radiocommunication Bureau (BR)

Circular Letter
5/LCCE/39

13 June 2013

**To Administrations of Member States of the ITU and Radiocommunication Sector Members,
ITU-R Associates participating in the work of Radiocommunication Study Group 5
and ITU-R Academia**

**Subject: Questionnaire on the use of VHF semi-automatic/automatic service in the
maritime mobile service**

**Reference: Recommendation ITU-R [M.493](#), *Digital selective-calling system for
use in the maritime mobile service***

Foreword

ITU-R Working Party 5B is currently revising Recommendation ITU-R M.493-13, *Digital selective-calling system for use in the maritime mobile service*, with objectives including simplifying the operation of the system and examining proposals to remove functions considered obsolete.

Some administrations have indicated that due to the wide implementation of cellular telephony/data networks along coastlines, ports and inland waterways, the semi-automatic/automatic VHF service which provides the interconnection of marine VHF radiotelephony (or data) into the public-switched telephone network is no longer operated by maritime coast stations within their jurisdiction.

Background

Ships and other stations in the maritime mobile service have used digital selective calling techniques in order to establish communications between ships and the public-switched telephone network via maritime shore stations.

The functions necessary to support this “semi-automatic/automatic VHF service” are currently included in Recommendation ITU-R M.493-13.

Questionnaire

Before any decision is made to remove the semi-automatic/automatic service capability within future revisions of Recommendation ITU-R M.493, it is important to determine whether this service is still used by any coast station for which you have responsibility. It should be noted that if this change is implemented only future shipborne equipment would be affected.

Accordingly, the Radiocommunication Bureau hereby invites Administrations of Member States and Radiocommunication Sector Members to provide answers to the following questions:

Question 1: Are there coast stations in the maritime mobile service which currently provide a semi-automatic/automatic service for the connection of maritime mobile users to the public switched telephone network in accordance with Recommendation ITU-R M.493?

Question 2: If there are such stations, how long is it anticipated that these stations will continue to provide these services?

Question 3: Are there any existing or future coast stations that are planned to provide semi-automatic/automatic VHF service, as in Question 1 above, to maritime mobile stations?

Question 4: Is there any objection to the removal of the semi-automatic/automatic capability as stated within Recommendation ITU-R M.493?

The Director of the Radiocommunication Bureau invites Administrations of Member States and Radiocommunication Sector Members to submit responses to brsgd@itu.int by **31 October** 2013.

The contact person from the Radiocommunication Bureau for this matter is:

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Distribution:

- Administrations of Member States of the ITU and Radiocommunication Sector Members participating in the work of Radiocommunication Study Group 5
- ITU-R Associates participating in the work of Radiocommunication Study Group 5
- ITU-R Academia
- Chairman and Vice-Chairmen of Radiocommunication Study Group 5
- Secretary General of the ITU, Director of the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau, Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau