



International Amateur Radio Union Region 1

2020 General Conference – Virtual Part

11-16 October 2020

Subject	Considerations about using FT8 in MGM Contest Classes		
Society	EDR	Country:	Denmark
Committee:	C5	Paper number:	NS20_C5_20
Author:	OZ5TG / Verner Topsøe / OZ Contest manager		

Introduction:

FT8 has evolved to be a major mode used for Amateur Radio Communication that has increased the overall activity considerably. The use of that coding has not yet been recognized as generally valid for contesting. Clarification is needed.

Background:

In daily QSO's FT8 is widely used for regional as well as DX QSO's whenever the conditions are proper, but have not yet been valid for IARU REG1 contests for several reasons.

Hence there have been serious problems in the different societies that run's SUB-Regional contests like NAC and all the different "sister-contests". The main reason being that the standard FT8 format normally only uses a 4 digit locator, which is only valid in IARU REG1 50MHz contests. All other contest must exchange a 6 digit locator. Further more is the report format not compatible with the report format normally used.

Key points and proposal:

With the new WSJT-X V2.1 and later revisions, it is now possible to select an "EU Contest Mode" that fulfills the requirements given for IARU REG1 contests. It may not be possible to format the log in REG1TEST format with WSJT-X, but at the time of writing this text there are one or more log programs that are capable of generating REG1TEST logs if the WSJT-X log is transferred to them, and more will probably follow, especially if FT8 EU Contest Mode is recognized by IARU REG1 as a valid QSO Mode.

The following example of the "EU VHF Contest Mode" is copied from the documentation found in WSJT-X V2.1 handbook (a 50 MHz QSO at June 06, 2020 15:45 between G4ABC and PA9XYZ is anticipated):

```
CQ TEST G4ABC IO91
      G4ABC PA9XYZ JO22
PA9XYZ 570123 IO91NP
      G4ABC R 580071 JO22DB
PA9XYZ G4ABC RR73
```

And will result in the following logentry:

#	Band	F(MHz)	Mode	DATE & TIME	Call	Send	Received
1	6m	50,313	FT8	0-06-2020 15:45:55	PA9XYZ	570123 IO91NP	580071 JO22DB
2	6m	-----	etc etc	----			

Together with the general information needed for a valid contest entry the information exchanged fulfills the requirements for a valid IARU REG1 contest log.

Recommendations:

IARU REG1 recognizes that “FT8 EU Contest Mode” is a valid MGM contest mode and can be used for Regional and Sub-Regional contest if the data is converted to a proper log format (REG1TEST) recognized by the IARU REG1 contest robot.

IARU REG1 encourages the member societies to implement “FT8 EU Contest Mode” in their national and Sub-Regional contests. At the same time it is important to inform all contestants that they must upgrade their WSJT programs to at least WSJT-X V2.1

Financial implications:

None