

Why you cannot fit a round peg in a square hole: path dependence of radio spectrum policy on digital dividend in Italy and the United Kingdom

**Maria Massaro & Prof. Erik Bohlin
Chalmers University of Technology
ITS Regional Conference
Brussels, June 24, 2014**

The paper

TYPE

- Comparative study of spectrum policy reforms implemented in Italy and the United Kingdom for the allocation of the digital dividend frequencies to the mobile service

AIM

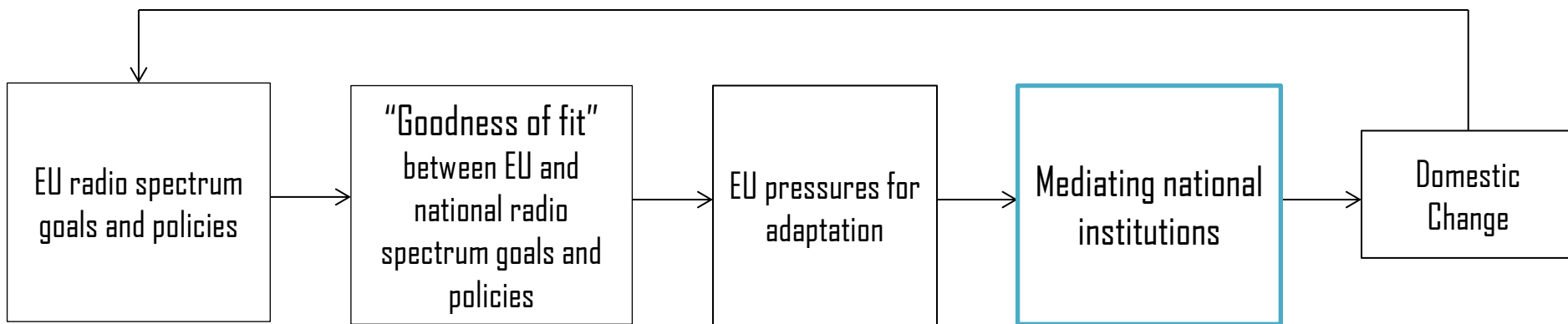
- to illustrate the evolution of EU radio spectrum policy on the digital dividend
- to understand whether the legacy of previous domestic policies and practices can prevent the European goal of harmonised radio spectrum use across Europe to be achieved.

Methodology

EUROPEANISATION THEORY

- European institutions determine national changes by transferring supranational norms into national practices (Knill, 2001; Bache & Marshall, 2004).
- Europeanisation as a country-specific process: national institutions shape domestic change (North, 1990).

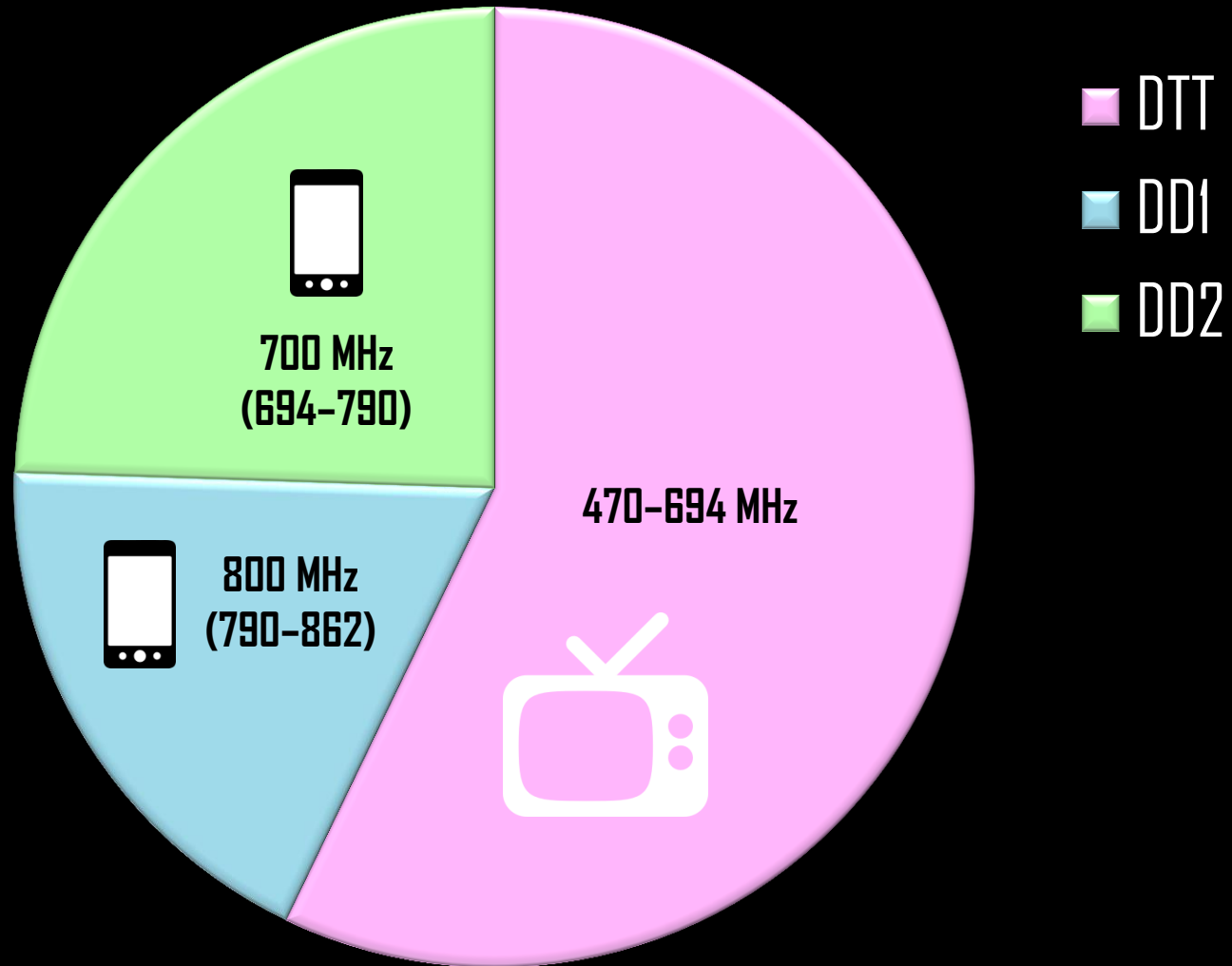
EUROPEANISATION AND NATIONAL CHANGE IN RADIO SPECTRUM POLICY: GOODNESS OF FIT



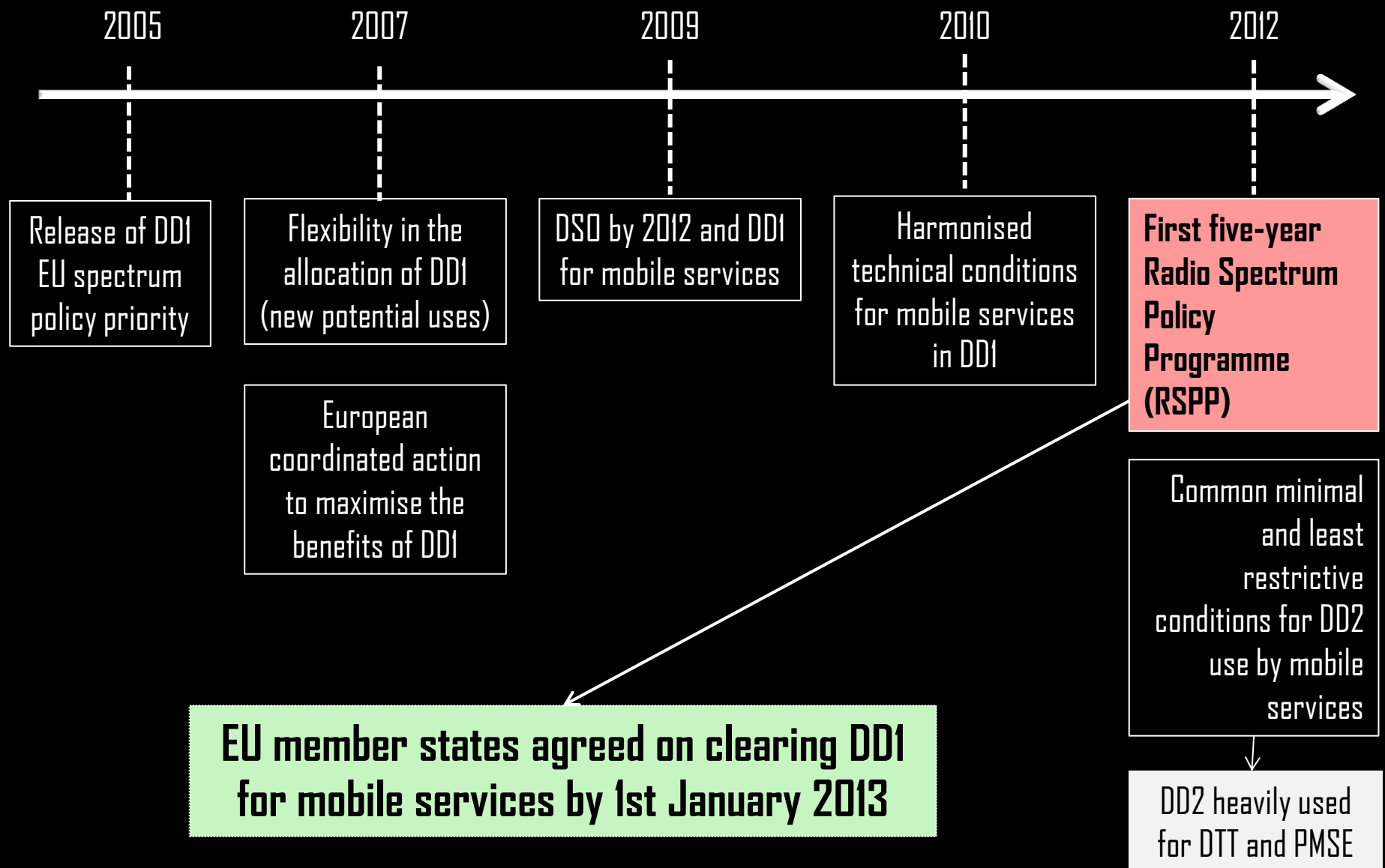
Source: adapted from Cowles et al. (2001) p. 6.

WRC decisions

470–862 MHz band (UHF)



DD EU strategy



DDI in EU member states

14 EU Member States

missed the previous agreed deadline of 1st January 2013 and asked policy derogations (extensions of time limit) due to a variety of exceptional reasons

12 Extensions of time limit

have been agreed

Special Case Bulgaria DDI for public security and defence purposes (part of DDI in Greece and Poland)

Extensions of time limit					
Member States (14)	AGREED (9) July 23, 2013		AGREED (2) October 17, 2013	AGREED (1) December 9, 2013	REFUSED (2)
	Spain Cyprus Lithuania Hungary Malta	Austria Poland Romania Finland	Greece Latvia	Czech Rep.	Slovakia Slovenia

Path-dependency of radio spectrum policy

Different national path towards DD allocation to mobile services

Path-dependence as a critical factor

- Legacy of previous national policies and management practices exerts long standing effects at domestic level
- Potential to prevent radical reforms (Cowles et al., 2001; Harmsen, 1999; Bache & Marshall, 2004; Borzel, 1999).

Subsidiary Principle

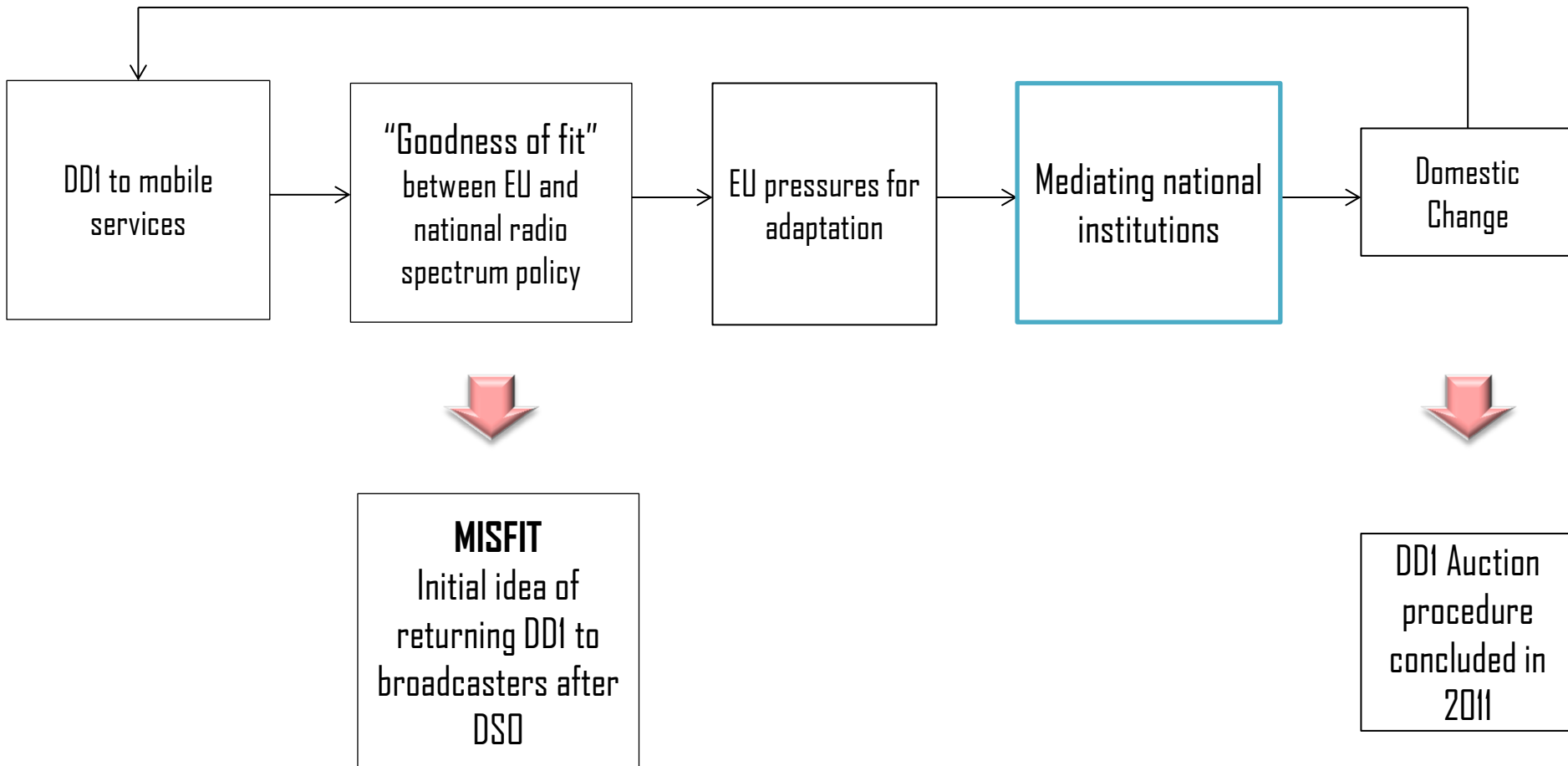
"It takes a lot of convincing to get member states to coordinate [on the RSPP] because they have traditionally been reluctant to coordinate on what is considered a sovereignty issue"
(PolicyTracker, 2013)

DD in Italy and the UK

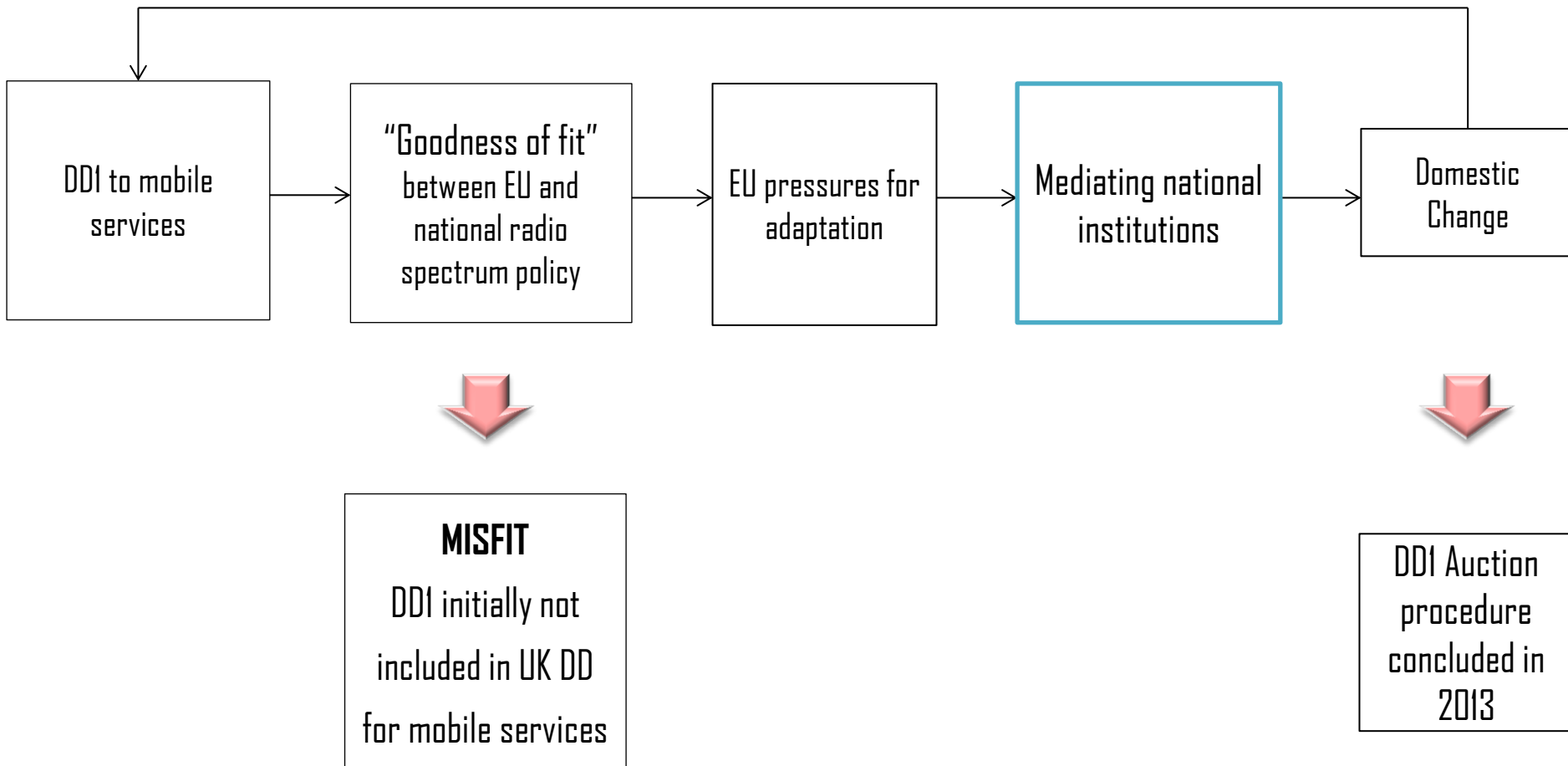
- Some differences and similarities

	ITALY	THE UK
TELEVISION MARKET STRUCTURE	Duopoly	Several Operators
DTT	Main television platform	
RADIO SPECTRUM POLICY	Self-sufficient attitude (preserving broadcasting legacy)	In line with EU (promoting mobile service allocation)
DD Delays	Disagreements among sector players, political matters, unexpected events	

DDI in Italy



DDI in the UK



Conclusions

- Radio spectrum policy is path dependent.
- Radio spectrum policy reforms at European level necessary but not sufficient condition for domestic adaptation.
- Objective of EU harmonisation of spectrum use subordinated to a country-specific process of transposing European initiatives into national level.
- National in-built resistance to change, but flexibility to adapt under strong EU pressure on national administrations.

Reflections

- Formulation radio spectrum policies, taking into account domestic institutional mediating effect.
- Realistic radio spectrum goals: a compromise between EU member states with high/low goodness of fit.
- Need for stronger commitment to harmonisation and coordination of spectrum use from EU member states.

Thank You