
One of the silver linings to the clouds of the current economy is that there are some great travel bargains available. If Europe is in your travel plans this summer, DJØQN says remember to bring a ham rig...

Traveling to Europe? Don't Forget Your HT!

BY MITCH WOLFSON,* DJØQN/K7DX

It has always surprised me to speak to American hams who have visited Europe but did not bring along any rigs to enjoy their hobby. When I ask them why, they usually answer that they were not aware of how the reciprocal licensing works and sometimes mention that they expected a hassle to bring their equipment. One time someone told me that he had visited several Mediterranean countries, including Greece and Turkey, on a cruise. He told me that he did not want to bother with the licensing hassle and was surprised when I told him that none of the countries he visited required extra permission to operate. This guy missed a great, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity!

I think that so many have read articles about DXpeditions and their accompanying customs horror stories that they associate the rest of the world outside the U.S. with these hassles. However, that is not the case in the European Union (EU). Therefore, to clear up these misconceptions and encourage more hams to be active on the air during their trips to Europe, I wrote this article to provide you with more background and to offer some tips on traveling to Europe and some European territories throughout the world.

I have been living in Munich, Germany for over 30 years and have traveled extensively on business and pleasure throughout Europe and beyond during this period. I almost always take at least one HT with me, which has allowed me to meet many people whom



The author at Lake Amersee near Munich. He can work the Echolink repeater on the Olympic Tower with his HT from there ... and he says you can, too! (Photo courtesy of the author)

I otherwise never would have met. Some QSOs have turned into eyeball QSOs, and if I was lucky, I was able to attend club meetings of local amateurs that I otherwise never would have known about.

Under the European Union, Europe has become much closer to what you are used to in the United States. There are currently 27 EU member countries, of which 15 of the EU member countries

plus Monaco, Vatican City, and San Marino use the same currency, the Euro.¹ The border controls between many European countries have either been torn down or there are plans to do so.² You can now travel by car or plane from Finland to Portugal without passing through a single passport or customs control, much like crossing state lines in the U.S. Once you enter an EU country, you have already passed pass-

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port control and customs for the entire EU, similar to entry at any port within the United States.

CEPT Recommendation T/R 61-01

The magic word here for operating ham radio is the European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administrations (CEPT) Recommendation T/R 61-01³, which is the basis for reciprocal licensing across the European region, as well as reciprocal acceptance by some non-CEPT member countries outside of Europe. Starting in 1985, the list of countries accepting the agreement has grown, and the recommendation has also been modified to eliminate the Morse Code requirement.

CEPT Recommendation T/R 61-02⁴ defines standards and a certificate for amateur radio classes and an examination syllabus using the "Harmonised Amateur Radio Examination Certificate" (HAREC). There have been recent changes to consolidate the three previous CEPT licenses: 1 and 2 into a single CEPT license class plus Class 3 into a Novice Class. This single license class now provides all HF and VHF privileges. The new Novice Class has not been implemented in many countries yet.⁵

There is one big caveat, though. On February 4, 2008, the CEPT changed its acceptance level of U.S. licenses. Only the Extra and Advanced Class licenses are now recognized as the basic CEPT Class, with full HF and VHF privileges. The General Class is considered the equivalent of the CEPT Novice license, and you should check the link provided to determine if the country you will visit offers a Novice license. The Technician Class license no longer has any CEPT equivalency. In addition, some countries do not recognize code-free licenses for any class for HF operation. Thus, if you are a code-free Extra, you also need to check first if you plan to operate on HF.⁶

What this means for you is simple: As long as you meet the licensing requirements above, all you need to operate in any country you plan to visit that is on the list in Table I is to carry your license plus a supporting document that states your equivalent CEPT license class. You can print this document, FCC Public Notice DA 99-2344, from the ARRL website⁷ and should carry this with you along with your FCC license during your travels. Although I personally have never had to show either my German or American license to anyone, I would recommend following this procedure.

Most of the CEPT member countries have signed the CEPT Recommendation T/R 61-01, allowing amateur radio to be used in their country and some territories without any further permission. Although The U.S. and Canada are not part of CEPT or HAREC, they are among the non-CEPT member countries that accept CEPT Recommendation T/R 61-01, based upon these defined license classes. (*Ed. Note: There is a separate reciprocal agreement between the U.S. and Canada; the acceptance of the CEPT Recommendation in this case applies only to permitting European amateurs to operate over here without needing a reciprocal license.*)

Getting Ready

Bringing along the rigs is not really any different than traveling within the U.S. At the point of entry into the EU, there is no reason to declare anything to customs, assuming you plan to take everything back with you. One misconception I have run across is that people seem afraid of customs, assuming that they must declare everything of value. This is not the case; customs is only interested in what people plan to bring into and leave within the EU—i.e., imports. In this case, an EU import duty (if applicable) and Value Added Tax⁸ (V.A.T.) would be charged on the import upon entry. As long as you're not planning to sell your gear during your visit, you may walk through the "Green Line" without any guilty feelings. Thousands of travelers do so every day, carrying expensive computers and cell phones back and forth across borders.

I have never been asked anything about my HTs in either checked or hand luggage, even when I traveled prior to the cell-phone days. An HT does not really appear any different to customs than a cell phone, which many people carry with them during their travels.

You may wish to take your HT in your hand luggage, which will go through scanners like a cell phone. If you decide to pack it in your checked suitcase, you may wish to remove the antenna and battery to protect it from accidental transmissions or noise. Note that as of January 1, 2008, it is no longer legal in the U.S. to pack a separate lithium-ion battery in a checked suitcase. Therefore, if your HT uses this type of battery, you will need to place the battery in your hand luggage.

HF may be a different case, depending upon the size of what you are bringing along. A small rig such as the Yaesu FT-897 or ICOM IC-7000 will fit in your

suitcase without a problem, and you will not have to claim it in customs if you are bringing it home with you. You may wish to have a copy of your invoice just in case there are any questions.

Again, make sure that you also bring your license and the FCC Public Notice DA 99-2344 document that I mentioned above. If you bring more expensive HF equipment along, you may wish to place a photocopy of your license in the suitcase with this equipment as well.

If you do plan to bring any amateur radio gear to be imported to the EU (e.g., sold or given away), remember to bring your invoices to be able to declare the value at the border. Amateur radio equipment is duty free in the EU (Table II); however V.A.T. will have to be paid. This can be significantly higher than the sales tax you are used to in the U.S. (our V.A.T. in Germany is 19%!).

Operating

It is very important to identify correctly and to know the band limits of the countries you visit. The prefix before home call (e.g., DL/K7DX) has become a standard. However, there may be differences in how these prefixes are used to identify the CEPT class license being used or local geographic identifiers.

Although 2 meters is consistent from 144–146 MHz across the CEPT countries⁹, 70 cm is inconsistent. In several countries it runs a full 10 MHz from 430–440 MHz, but some countries limit it to 432–438 MHz or have other restrictions. There are so many variations, changes and countries that I recommend using a search engine such as Google to look up repeater details in the countries you plan to visit—e.g., type in "repeaters France." An excellent summary of repeater internet links can also be found at DXZone.¹⁰

HF band plans also vary somewhat between countries, so please look these up before leaving if you plan to bring along an HF rig. Six meters in particular is not consistent across all countries. Again, if you hold a no-code license and wish to operate HF, don't forget to look at the most current table on the internet to determine if the country you plan to visit accepts your license for HF operation.

Note that most European countries do not have a third-party agreement with the U.S. This means that you may not put the XYL or other non-licensed persons on the microphone over a local RF link to say hi to the buddies back home over Echolink or IRLP. Third-party agreements apply only to non-licensed persons, so it is perfectly legal for a

Country	Prefix	EU Member	Euro Currency	Schengen (no passport control)
Within Europe				
Austria	OE/	Yes	Yes	Yes
Belgium	ON/	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bosnia and Herzegovina	T9/	No	No	No
Bulgaria	LZ/	Yes	2012*	No
Croatia	9A/	No	No	No
Cyprus	5B/	Yes	Yes	2009*
Czech Republic	OK/	Yes	2012*	Yes
Denmark	OZ/; Faroe Islands OY/; Greenland OX/	Yes	No	Yes
Estonia	ES/	Yes	2011*	Yes
Finland	OH/; Aland Islands OHØ/	Yes	Yes	Yes
France	F/	Yes	Yes	Yes
Germany	DL/	Yes	Yes	Yes
Greece	SV/; SW/ w/o morse	Yes	Yes	Yes
Hungary	HA/ or HG/	Yes	2012*	Yes
Iceland	TF/	No	No	Yes
Ireland	EI/	Yes	Yes	No
Italy	I/	Yes	Yes	Yes
Latvia	YL/	Yes	2012*	Yes
Liechtenstein	HBØ/	No	No	Dec. 2008*
Lithuania	LY/	Yes	2010*	Yes
Luxembourg	LX/	Yes	Yes	Yes
Macedonia (FYROM)	Z3/	No	No	No
Monaco	3A/	No	Yes	Yes
Netherlands	PA/	Yes	Yes	Yes
Norway	LA/; Svalbard/Spitzbergen JW/	No	No	Yes
Poland	SP/	Yes	2012*	Yes
Portugal	CT/; Azores CU/; Madeira CT3/	Yes	Yes	Yes
Romania	RO/	Yes	2014*	2011*
Slovak Republic	OM/	Yes	2009*	Yes
Slovenia	S5/	Yes	Yes	Yes
Spain	EA/ or EB/; Las Palmas, Santa Cruz de Tenerife EA8/; EB8/; Ceuta, Melilla; EA9/; EB9/	Yes	No	Yes
Sweden	SM/ or SA/	Yes	No	Yes
Switzerland	HB9/	No	No	Dec. 2008*
Turkey	TA/	No	No	No
Ukraine	UT/	No	No	No
United Kingdom	M/; Isle of Man MD/; N. Ireland MI/; Jersey MJ/; Scotland MM/; Guernsey MU/; Wales MW/	Yes	No	No
			<i>*goal</i>	<i>*estimated</i>
Outside Europe				
Australia	/VK	No	No	No
Canada	VE/; Newfoundland VO/; Nunavut, Prince Edward Island, Yukon VY/	No	No	No
French Territories remaining Territories require operation permission (FK, FO French Polynesia, FR/B, FR/E, FR/G, FR/J, FR/T, FT, FW)	Guadeloupe FG/; Mayotte FH/; St. Barthélemy FJ/; Martinique FM/; Clipperton FO/; St. Pierre & Miquelon FP/; Réunion FR/; St. Martin FS/; Guiane Française FY/		Some	No
Israel	4X/; 4Z7/ w/o Morse	No	No	No
Netherlands Antilles	Curaçao PJ2/; Bonaire PJ4/; Sint Maarten PJ7/; Sint Eustatius PJ5/; Saba PJ6/		No	No
New Zealand	ZL/	No	No	No
Peru	OA/ with number of Departamento (zone)	No	No	No
South Africa	ZS/; ZR/ w/o Morse	No	No	No
United States	W/ or K/ with prefix according to State or Territory	No	No	No

Table I— List of countries accepting CEPT Recommendation T/R 61-01 as of January 1, 2008.

8517 6990 90 0	Morse keys and accessories. Kits that can be used to build transceivers, transmitters or receivers.
8517 6200 90 0	Transceivers
8517 7090 00 0	Antennas

Table II— EU customs numbers (duty free) for amateur radio equipment.

licensed foreign ham to use a U.S. repeater and vice-versa. I have noticed a number of repeater operators blocking non-U.S. amateurs from accessing their Echolink or IRLP enabled repeaters or links due to a lack of understanding of the Third Party agreement concept.

Using Repeaters

Operating local repeaters can be quite different between the countries, or even within a country. In some countries you will find CTCSS to be commonly used. In others, such as Germany, you will find that a 1750-Hz tone may be required to open repeaters. Many U.S.-version HTs support a 1750-Hz tone through a menu change, but it is easy to whistle if this is not available. If you plan to operate on 70 cm, make sure you know the band plan first, since smaller bands mean different repeater splits and even reversed input/outputs. As a rule, you will not find autopatch in use anywhere; however, Voice over IP (VoIP) access, such as Echolink and IRLP, is quite common. D-STAR repeaters are also becoming more common, and you can look up the current list before leaving.¹¹

Your luck will also vary finding locals to come back to you when you get on their repeater. Remember to speak clearly and slowly, since some of the local hams may operate on VHF/UHF exclusively and may not have HF experience with an English-speaking ham. If no one comes back to you, do not feel bad; just move on to another repeater or monitor until it gets active and try again.

My personal experience is that the local hams are more reserved in some countries than others. For example, I have had good response using repeaters in the Nordic countries, Germany, and the United Kingdom, among others, but less so in France and Italy. Bear in mind that the locals are not being unfriendly if there is no response, but instead may not feel comfortable answering your CQ, probably due to language issues.

Using Echolink and IRLP

Echolink and IRLP are becoming more and more popular in Europe, as the local authorities allow repeaters and simplex links to operate and these are installed. Knowing the German mentality as well

as I do, I was surprised at how quickly the authorities here approved this type of operation. I maintain an Echolink and IRLP simplex link on 70 cm, which is even required to have its own callsign.¹² There is still more bureaucracy compared to the U.S., but I didn't find it all that difficult.

As a general rule, IRLP is common in English-speaking countries such as the U.K., with Echolink being dominant across Europe. Use the status pages on Echolink¹³ and IRLP¹⁴ to find a list of repeaters and simplex links local to where you plan to go. In some cases, you will find the access codes listed as well. Then you can use the system to connect to your local nodes in the U.S. just as if you were still home. You may wish to send an e-mail to the system operator before you leave, just to make sure, but this usually is not necessary if the site has been updated with the access codes. Just remember the time difference and to identify correctly with the country prefix! Also remember to write down the node numbers you wish to connect to back home before leaving.

For those who want to use Echolink but cannot locate a local RF access to a node through a repeater or simplex link, theoretically you can use your notebook PC to connect to the nodes back home. The problem with doing this is that anywhere you have public internet access you will not have access to the router being used to forward the ports. In other words, it won't work at all; it will

connect without any audio being sent and then time out.

The only easy way around this problem is to use an Echolink Proxy server. There is a list of public proxy servers on the Echolink site.¹⁵ However, they have limited capacity and cannot be considered reliable. The latest version of the Echolink software also has a list of public proxy servers built-in, so I suggest you make sure that you have the newest version installed before leaving home. If you have access to a PC or server that runs 24/7 and has a fixed public IP or dynamic DNS address, you can set up everything to run the Echolink Proxy software and router port forwarding before leaving. You may wish to do this as a group project and keep access limited by using a password to keep it reliable. It is also important that you test your new proxy server thoroughly before leaving home, just in case of configuration problems in the software or router. Further information on Echolink Proxy servers can be found on the Echolink website.¹⁶

Note that since you are not going over an RF link outside of the U.S. when using the PC software, it is not necessary to ID using a foreign prefix before your call. The repeater or simplex link on the U.S. side doesn't know or care where you are located, thanks to the internet!

Give It a Try!

Operating during your trip to Europe is a way to have new experiences and meet new friends. It is no longer any more complicated than traveling within the U.S. Even if you do not travel often to Europe, it would be a shame not to be QRV during that rare opportunity. Also, don't forget to give me a shout on 432.850 MHz if you come through Munich!

Notes

1. <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Euro>>
2. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schengen_Agreement>
3. <<http://www.erodocdb.dk/Docs/doc98/official/pdf/TR6101.PDF>>
4. <<http://www.ero.dk/documentation/docs/doc98/official/pdf/TR6102.PDF>>
5. <http://www.erodocdb.dk/doks/implement_doc_adm.aspx?docid=2136>
6. <http://www.erodocdb.dk/doks/implement_doc_adm.aspx?docid=1802>
7. <<http://www.arrl.org/FandES/field/regulations/io/cept-ral.pdf>>
8. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Value_added_tax>
9. Repeaters start at 145.600 out with -600 kHz split, 12.5 kHz channels through 145.7875 MHz.
10. <http://www.dxzone.com/catalog/Operating_Modes/Repeaters/>
11. <<http://www.dstarusers.org/repeaters.php>>
12. DM0QN, IRLP 5378 & Echolink 3001
13. <<http://www.Echolink.org/logins.jsp>>
14. <<http://status.irlp.net/>>
15. <<http://www.Echolink.org/proxylist.jsp>>
16. <<http://www.Echolink.org/proxy.htm>>

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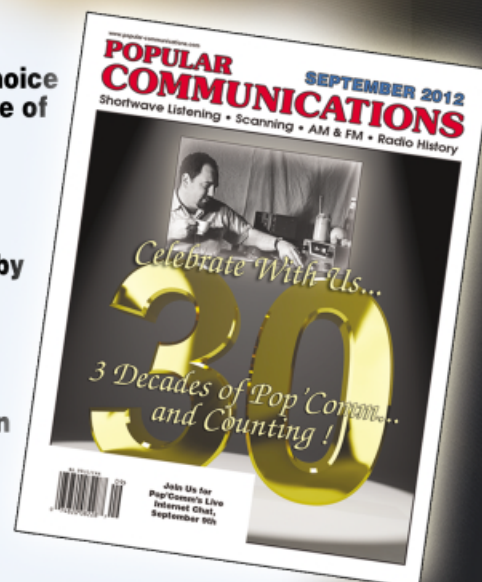
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