

# What's Hot in DAB!



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## The World DAB Forum Newsletter

### N.6 - November 2001

Welcome to the 6th edition of the World DAB Forum Email Newsletter. This SPECIAL edition concentrates solely on this year's successful WorldDAB General Assembly which took place in Brussels on 8-9th November. Read on for a round-up of the main points and important announcements made at the event.

The General Assembly proceedings, full report and photos will also be made available from the WorldDAB Web Site at [http://www.worlddab.org/events/events\\_frame.htm](http://www.worlddab.org/events/events_frame.htm)

### The WorldDAB Project Office

<http://www.worlddab.org>

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## THE WORLD DAB FORUM GENERAL ASSEMBLY - Brussels, 8-9th November 2001

The Seventh meeting of the WorldDAB General Assembly was held in Brussels November 8 and 9. What follows is a snapshot of the proceedings, and a more in-depth report is being prepared by the Project Office.

Several key messages were repeated by many of the speakers to the Assembly, prime among these being the need for collaboration between private and public broadcasters, and for strategic partnerships within the industry.

The overall tone of the Assembly was one of renewed confidence in terrestrial digital radio among Europe's broadcasters both commercial and public.

President **Michael McEwen** opened the proceedings, and highlighted the recent General Motors of Canada announcement regarding line-fitting DAB. He showed a bright and breezy video extolling the virtues of digital radio, and added that GM is reported to be in early discussions with Opel on fitting digital radios in Europe.

AER President, **Hans-Dieter Hillmoth** called for the EU to support European commercial broadcasters in the roll out of DAB on a pan-European level, while EBU Director **Raina Konstantinova** confirmed that EBU members strongly believe that DAB is the right technology to take radio into the digital age. She added that EBU members have ambitious plans for further extensions of DAB transmitter networks and services.

The Keynote address was given by EU Commissioner **Erkki Liikanen**, responsible for Enterprise and the Information Society. It was the first time that the radio industry had been addressed at such high level by a European Institution. This sent the positive signal that Commissioner Liikanen's Enterprise and Information Society now considers the relevance of a pan-European co-operative approach for the successful roll out of DAB across the continent, and

they are discussing this with experts from the Member States.

Commissioner Liikanen emphasised the need for greater agreement between satellite and terrestrial radio broadcasters, and for there to be a clear pricing strategy for receivers. He called for broadcasters to actively market DAB.

Following a coffee break sponsored by Pioneer Europe, the Assembly got down to the serious business of elections. The following people were elected to the Steering Board:

## OFFICERS

- . President - Annika Nyberg (YLE)
- . Vice-President & Chair of European Affairs Committee - Paul Brown (CRCA)
- . Treasurer - Karl Breithaupt (SWR)
- . Chair, Marketing Committee - Delphine Josse (TDF)
- . Chair, Technical Committee - Hamed Amor (Group 3G)
- . Chair, Regulatory and Spectrum Committee - Goran Arvedahl (Teracom)

## MEMBERS

- . Lim Hock Chuan (Asia DAB Committee)
- . Philip Laven (EBU)
- . Milagros Mostaza (AER)
- . Rony van Haegenbergh (EICTA)
- . Tony King-Smith (Panasonic)
- . David Hawkins (Roke Manor)
- . Michael Daucher (Grundig)
- . Werner Poehmüller (Bosch)
- . Markus Zumkeller (Sony)
- . Lindsay Cornell (BBC)
- . Jan Engdahl (Swedish Radio)
- . Quentin Howard (Digital One)
- . Glyn Jones (Digital One)
- . Yves-François Dehery (CCETT)
- . Thomas Wächter (Deutsche Telekom)
- . Simon Mason (NTL)
- . Reiner Müller (BLM)
- . Duff Roman (DRRI)
- . Giuseppe Latis (Club DAB Italia)

The day ended with a stimulating video from **Marcus Schuler**, Programme Director of SWR's youth station, Das Ding. Delegates then enjoyed a fascinating tour of the African Museum, followed by dinner, all courtesy of Belgium's Flemish public broadcaster, VRT.

Day two began with a report from outgoing chair of the World DAB European Affairs Committee, **Michael Green**. With the good work the committee has put in lobbying members of DBEG, the EU Experts Group is now better focused on radio in general and better prepared to allow the Commission to move forward with its support of digital radio. As he handed his chairmanship to **Paul Brown**, Michael warned that lobbying for radio issues in Brussels is not for the faint hearted!

**Anne Coutard** has now delivered her report on the Future of Radio in the Digital Age to the French Ministry of Culture and Communications where it was

well received. It is hoped that the report will pave the way for an extension of the temporary legal framework, the Loi Fillon, to ensure the continuation of digital radio services until a permanent legal framework is brought out under the next government in early 2002.

From WorldDAB's perspective, the key message from Madame Coutard's report is the need for a durable legal framework, but she also spoke about the need for terrestrial and satellite broadcasters to work more closely together, and emphasised that digital radio must continue to appear in everything from mobile phones and PDAs to alarm clocks.

Following reports from the Technical and Commercial committee and the Regulatory and Spectrum committee, Professor **Karl Breithaupt** presented the accounts for 2000 and the proposed budget for 2001, both of which were approved by the Assembly.

Next up was **Roland Bladh** from DG Information Society of the European Commission who warned the Assembly that the radio industry itself must tackle the problems which exist between satellite and terrestrial broadcasters, because, if left to official bodies (CEPT and the EC) this could take a considerable time. He added that manufacturers must also take responsibility for driving the roll out of DAB across Europe.

On the question of standards, both Erkki Liikanen and Roland Bladh referred to the List of Standards to be published in the Official Journal of the European Communities, as proposed within the Communications Directives (the so-called 'telecom package'), and indicated that Eureka 147 could be included in that list after due considerations.

**Jenny Abramsky**, Director of Radio at the BBC, told the Assembly about the five new digital radio networks the BBC is planning to launch next year. She said that DAB is the only technology the BBC believes can take all radio platforms into the digital age and emphasised the need for creative content on new digital channels.

She announced new plans from the BBC to extend its current 60% transmitter network to 65% by the end of this year, to 80% by the end of 2003 and rising to 85% by early 2004.

Ms Abramsky added that the BBC would vigorously cross promote digital radio but only when a wide range of products at low price points is available in shops.

Grundig's **Michael Daucher** was wearing his **IMDR** hat to report on Germany's marketing and communications strategy designed to raise awareness of digital radio among consumers.

The always passionate and energetic **Roland Faure**, President of La Radio Numerique in France, told the Assembly that the CSA, the French regulatory body, has recently announced that nine extra blocks of L-Band would be freed up to accommodate more services in the Paris region. Licensing of these services will take place very soon.

Digital One's **Jeff Astle** turned attention away from Europe with a report on the Asia-Pacific region. We are, perhaps, too Eurocentric and need to extend our interests in DAB to Asia, not least because it is a key market for manufacturers. Jeff reported on a research project for the ABU and ITU which he had recently

completed and which included in-depth conversations with public broadcasters from such diverse countries as Thailand, China, India, Turkey, Pakistan, Iran, Vietnam, Sri Lanka and Brunei.

Jeff advised that the Asia DAB Committee should be used to develop closer partnerships between broadcasters and manufacturers in Singapore, Taiwan and Korea. He also suggested WorldDAB should target the next likely DAB countries such as Australia and Hong Kong.

**Michael McEwen** then summed up his four years as President of WorldDAB and called for the work to continue under the leadership of the new President, **Annika Nyberg**. Michael was presented with a Digital Radio by Paul Brown who praised him for a dogged and successful four years as President on WorldDAB.

**Ms Nyberg** introduced herself to the Assembly using the Finnish word "Sisu" to describe herself. It means, she said, someone who doesn't give up easily, one who is driven and energetic. She also said she was looking forward to the challenge of working with all WorldDAB members.

Echoing earlier speakers, Ms Nyberg noted the real need to work with DVB-T and DRM broadcasters, and to build confidence in Europe and around the world that DAB is a technology which is here to stay. She emphasised the need for stronger marketing efforts and said she is confident the marketing committee will rise to this challenge.

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