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I am very pleased to be here with you today, first of all, to tell you about the last achievements of DAB in France, then to figure out the achievements in the countries attending World DAB's General Assembly. As France is now late in unfolding Digital Audio Broadcasting, your experience is very important for us to be able to catch up on this delay.

Which level has DAB reached in France?

- 25 years after the first experimentations of DAB,
- 12 years after the legal framework laying down the terms of its deployment,
- 8 years after launching the first call for candidates, Digital Audio Broadcasting still only exists in three French areas: Paris, Marseille, and Nice.

The French remain very unfamiliar with it, and the supply of radio terminals able to broadcast is still insufficient.

Why are we so late in comparison with our European neighbors while 10 years ago, DAB benefited in France of a large consensus and while it provides a broad number of advantages, which I am sure you know, in comparison with the other broadcasting means:

- Quality of the sound, associated data;
- Enrichment of the supply;
- Possibility for the radios to broaden the cover, that they can no longer do on the FM band, already saturated in France;
- Broadcasting costs, inferiors to the ones on the FM band;
- Free listening and anonymity.

Therefore, in 2008 (two thousand and eight), when the first call for candidates was launched, all the private and public radios were enthusiastic. Nothing seemed able to prevent the deployment of DAB until, after having applied for the calls simultaneously launched in 19 areas fully covering the territory, the four biggest French private groups decided to withdraw their applications. They invoqued two reasons:

- First, the cost for the double broadcast in the areas where they were already available on the FM band;
- Then, the development of radio listening on the internet, more interesting, according to them, than DAB.

These private groups are :

1. NRJ and its four radios (NRJ NOSTALGIE CHERIE FM and RIRE ET CHANSONS)
2. LAGARDERE and its three radios (EUROPE 1 VIRGIN and RFM)
3. RTL and its three radios (RTL RTL2 and FUN RADIO)
4. And NEXT RADIO and its two radios (RMC and BFM Business)

I would, myself, add a third reason: the fear of a competition which could, following the adoption of DAB, arise on markets where they already exist.

We however launched three calls for candidates in PARIS, MARSEILLE and NICE in 2012 (twenty twelve). But in September, we were informed that the French Government did not wish that Radio France which, so far, had participated to all the steps prior to the deployment of DAB, exist on these three areas.

DAB was basically starting with a disability as the radios of the big groups (RTL LAGARDERE NEXT RADIO and NRJ), and of Radio France represented 80% of the French radio audience.

We couldn't stop there. This is the reason why, in January 2015, CSA disclosed a report on the evolution of the main radio broadcasting modes (AM, FM, internet) in the French radio landscape, and on the DAB position within. As DAB was, according to me, no longer considered as an alternative to the other broadcasting modes as, contrary to the other countries, we were not foreseeing FM's extinction, then we saw it as a complement.

As a conclusion in the report, we decided to go further in unfolding DAB but in a different way from the one chosen in 2008, so as to foster the companies, including those showing reluctant to apply to the call for candidates.

Thus, in December 2015 (twenty fifteen), the CSA published a timetable for local calls for candidates, to be unfolded over 7 years, capable of covering the whole country by 2023 (twenty twenty three), and selecting in priority border areas where the radio spectrum is scarce (e.g. North of France and Alsace) and those where DAB is already experimented, such as in Lyon. These calls will not be launched simultaneously in all the French regions, as otherwise it would have raised important expenses for the radios, but successively, in a clocked manner, so as to preserve investment capacities of the radios.

Besides, we have decided not to use the entire available spectrum, and saved a part of it to allow, in the future, the launching of new national calls for radios not willing to apply to the first calls.

The first local calls should allow DAB to cover shortly 20% of the French population, as this is the threshold from which the radio terminals manufacturers are legally required to integrate DAB technology, which would make the number of DAB terminals significantly raise, as it is still insufficient.

In line with this timetable, we have launched a first series of calls for candidates in the North, in Alsace and in the area of Lyon.

128 (a hundred and twenty eight) radios applied. The selection will be made this month and the radios selected should start broadcasting by 2017 (twenty seventeen).

In addition to that we are preparing the second series of calls of the timetable by the end of the year in TOULOUSE, ROUEN and NANTES and a third series in PARIS, MARSEILLE and NICE, where calls have been launched but where spectrum is still available.

So, you can acknowledge that CSA is determined to unfold DAB as you have been able to do in your respective countries.

We can't accept neither that radio is the only media not to modernize in France, nor that France is the last country to modernize it.