

EUROPEAN COMMISSIONER DEFIES TELECOMS AND BROADCAST INDUSTRY RECOMMENDATIONS

Hannover, 16th March 2007

Commissioner Reding says No to platform neutrality for mobile broadcasting and favours a technology constrained by lack of spectrum.

European Commissioner for Information Society and Media, Viviane Reding, today ignored the advice of the **European Mobile Broadcasting Council (EMBC)** and the majority of Europe's broadcasters and Telecoms operators, and, in what appears to be a solo decision, said that her technology of choice for European mobile broadcasting should be DVB-H.

The EMBC, which includes every major mobile telecoms operator, broadcaster, network provider and technology manufacturer from the Member States, has spent the past year studying the mobile technology market in Europe. Its report, presented at the **European Commission conference on Mobile TV** during **Ce-Bit** today (Friday, March 16), concluded "there is no urgent need for specific new E.U. regulation to foster the introduction and development of mobile broadcasting." Rather the market should be allowed to decide for itself which technologies are best suited for broadcasting television, radio and data to mobile devices in Europe. The Council recommended technology neutrality and said the Commission "should not favour any one technology over another."

Europe's telecoms companies and broadcasters were therefore stunned today when Ms. Reding flew in the face of the Council's report and defied her own policy of technology neutrality, saying: "The industry should agree on one single standard. I believe this should be the DVB-H family of standards." She went on to suggest that if the industry and member states failed to agree on one standard she would be forced to "intervene with regulatory measures."

The **WorldDMB Forum**, an international, non-governmental organization whose role is to promote the awareness, adoption and implementation of **DAB/DMB** worldwide using the Eureka 147 family of standards, believes the Commissioner's stance is dangerous and detrimental to the future of mobile broadcasting in Europe.

Many European countries, including the **UK, Denmark, Switzerland, Norway, Belgium, Germany, Spain** etc have already deployed portable and mobile broadcasting using DAB digital radio and DMB (Digital Multimedia Broadcasting), both of which are versions of a family of compatible European standards originally developed by the European-funded Eureka147 Project. Mobile TV in the UK is delivered using DAB-IP, while in Germany the DMB variant is the platform for its national mobile TV network. **France** has just announced its intention to adopt DMB and other EU Member States including **Ireland, Italy, Portugal and Sweden** are in trials or planning to adopt the DAB/DMB standard. Indeed, DMB is the world's most successful mobile TV platform with millions of devices already in use in Asia.

Says **WorldDMB President, Quentin Howard**: "It is ridiculous for the Commission to think that only one system can work everywhere! Each country has its own unique requirements and market conditions and the Commissioner's preference for one solution suggests she has failed to grasp that mobile operators and broadcasters need flexibility to develop different business models.

"It is vital for European industry that the market is not restricted to one specific technology but rather we are able to use different systems tailored to each market. Technology is a rapidly and continually evolving process and it would be damaging to Europe's economy and its citizens for the Commission to mandate one standard.

"Madame Reding says she prefers a European technology for Europe and cites interoperability as an important issue. I couldn't agree more. DAB/DMB is a European technology whose development was funded by the EU. This European system has been adopted by leading technology nations including **Korea and China**. DMB is the world's most successful mobile TV platform by an order of magnitude compared to DVB-H.

"On interoperability, I am pleased to remind her that **WorldDMB** and the **DVB Forum** are already working together to ensure that DAB/DMB and DVB-H2 (the next version of DVB-H) can be interoperable.

"The availability of spectrum is key to the roll-out of mobile TV and radio, and having a combination of DMB and DVB-H, for example, means you can start mobile broadcasting now in most European countries without the need for the Commission to do anything at all. For the Commissioner to sweep away all these issues, contradict her own policy of neutrality and to ignore the recommendations of the EMBC is unbelievable."

The fact is that for many countries in Europe, the implementation of DVB-H is years away due to unavailability of spectrum until analogue TV is switched off. DAB/DMB, on the other hand, is ready to go, has spectrum available, requires no new legislation or intervention by the EC and has already seen significant business investment across the continent and the world with over 400 different types of receiver already available.

The Commissioner's statement today serves to undermine all this, jeopardises investments made by European broadcasters and manufacturers in other technologies and contradicts everything the EMBC advised. Why, one wonders, is Commissioner Reding defying the wishes of the European Telecoms and broadcasting industry which is united in calling for technology neutrality? **WorldDMB recommends that Member States look at the facts and consider what is best for their own market and spectrum conditions, as for example France and the UK have already done.**

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Notes to Editors: The foundation standard DAB and related standards such as DMB can be seen and heard in nearly 40 countries from Canada to Australia, across Europe and the Far East. Countries including India, China and South Africa, are testing DAB and developing consumer trials. More than 500 million people worldwide are within range of a DAB/DMB transmitter, and there are nearly 1000 services on air. Created from the onset to enable mobile reception with audio, video and multimedia capabilities, the DAB standard has recently extended its lead into the world of mobile multimedia delivery through its DMB and IP applications. DMB and DAB-IP are DAB's Mobile TV solutions and share the same core standard, infrastructure and receiver technology. The launch of the first ever Mobile TV services took place in Korea in December 2005 using DMB technology. Further DMB launches have taken place in Germany; services using IP for mobile TV have been launched in the UK; and more mobile TV launches are expected in Europe and China throughout the next year.

About WorldDMB

WorldDMB is an international, non-governmental organisation whose role is to promote the awareness, adoption and implementation of Eureka 147 based technologies worldwide. The organisation's name refers to 'digital multimedia broadcasting' including radio, mobile TV and broadcast new media services. Its members include public and commercial broadcasters, receiver manufacturers and other companies and bodies committed to the promotion of services and equipment based on the Eureka 147 family of standards.