

Inauguration of French Digital Radio takes place

London & Paris, Tuesday 20th October 2009

The symbolic launch of digital radio took place today in Paris at the Siel & Satis Le Radio conference 2009, marking the beginning of France's nationwide rollout of digital radio. Parisians will be able to receive close to 60 services from public, commercial and community broadcasters.

Mr Rachid Arhab, member of the Conseil supérieur de l'audiovisuel (CSA), the French media regulator, who led the symbolic launch said, "This is an historic day for the French radio industry," and pressed the red button to start the digital transmissions. In his address he encouraged the digital radio industry to continue collaborating closely to roll out digital radio. He also revealed the CSA is to meet with the heads of the major French radio companies in the next few weeks to discuss digital expansion and the timing of analogue switch-off.

In 2006 the French radio industry announced its decision to start digital radio services and set a timescale which has been met by today's launch. The French government is supporting the rapid roll out of digital radio with a new law requiring that electronic products containing a radio must include a digital compatible receiver. All products including in-car are mandated to have digital radio enabled as standard before 2014.

Mr Quentin Howard, President of WorldDMB said, "France has embraced the need to move to digital in a compelling way to ensure its radio industry is properly equipped for the future beyond analogue. That it has done so in a co-ordinated manner involving government, regulators and the broadcast industry is impressive and a process I would commend to others".

Several countries are adopting similar cross-industry steps supported by their governments. The Digital Britain report released in the UK in 2009 includes policies to accelerate the take up of digital with analogue switch-over date suggested for 2015. The Danish government is planning to switch off FM (analogue) radio services in favour of DAB, and digital radio migrations plans in the Swiss market are progressing, confirming that radio, like TV, is going digital.

Further digital radio services will be launched in Paris, Marseille and Nice and will be rolled out to other areas of France during 2010 as analogue TV frequencies are released. The French market is focusing not only on audio services but will offer radio with interactive screens which allow listeners to see information such as album covers, artist names, news, weather and traffic information.

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About WorldDMB:

WorldDMB is an international, non-governmental organisation with a mandate 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

Notes to Editors: The foundation standard DAB and related standards such as DAB+ and DMB can be seen and heard in nearly 40 countries from Canada to Australia, across Europe and the Far East. Countries including India 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 over 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 compatible DMB application. DMB offers a mobile TV and audio solution and shares the same core standard, infrastructure and receiver technology. The launch of the world's first Mobile TV services took place in Korea in December 2005 using DMB technology and will be the basis for the launch of digital radio in France in 2009. DMB is on-air in China in five major cities including Beijing, and more DAB, DAB+, and DMB services are expected to launch in Europe during the next year. The addition of DAB+ as a highly efficient audio coding has been ETSI standardized and many countries throughout Europe and in the Asia Pacific are planning commercial launches of DAB+ digital radio services in 2009.