

Germany and Sweden Move Toward Digital Radio Future

Norway expands national DAB offerings

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Germany's public service financing committee, the KEF, unanimously agreed this week that it will provide funding to facilitate the roll out of national digital radio in Germany, provided the industry meets several specific criteria. The move follows last week's meeting between Germany's commercial radio broadcasters and network operator, Media Broadcast, at which all participants agreed to work together to facilitate national digital radio. At the earlier meeting, Dr Gerd Bauer, Radio Supervisor at the Association of State and Media Authorities, called on the KEF to "pave the way for more digital supply and pluralism in radio broadcasting in Germany."

The funds, which allow public broadcaster Deutschland Radio, to build out a national digital radio network using DAB+ technology, will be available providing the industry meets a tight timetable set out by the KEF. Space on the network however will be shared between public and commercial broadcasters giving the whole industry the opportunity to secure future development of radio. Conditions require commercial and public broadcasters to sign contracts with Media Broadcast GmbH by the end of September. Funding will also be made available to ARD for programmes to be broadcast in the federal states.

Dr. Bauer said of the decision: "This schedule is ambitious but it is also realistic. Today's decision by the KEF signals a restart of Digital Radio in 2011 with the good will of all parties, not least the station operators."

In Sweden, the government has passed a new Radio and TV Act which includes legislation affecting the digitalisation of the country's radio network. The new law, which comes into effect on August 1, 2010, allows commercial radio companies to apply for digital licenses for the first time. The Act gives broadcasters the opportunity to go digital using DAB+ just one flavour of the DAB family of standards.

Stephan Guance, Head of network provider Teracom Sweden, says: "The decision can be regarded as an important first step towards a transition to digital radio, which is something that a unified radio industry has waited a long time for."

Meanwhile, Norway has added four stations to the national DAB multiplex. The addition of Radio Norway, Radio1, PS and NRJ means that all major radio stations in Norway are now broadcasting on DAB. The four stations will reach 80% of the country's population.

Ole Jorgen Torvmark, General Manager of Digitalradio Norway, says: "This proves that Norwegian broadcasters are ready to move to a digital platform."

WorldDMB's Project Director, Letty Zambrano, welcomes these three important international developments. "Digital radio using the Eureka 147 family of standards, continues to thrive in Europe and around the world as more countries expand their digital radio offerings," she says.

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For more information contact Rosemary Smith, WorldDMB Project Office on 020 3206 7847 or rosemary.smith@worlddab.org

Notes to Editors: The DAB family is the most successful set of digital radio standards in the world today. Created from the outset for mobile and portable reception of audio, multimedia and video services. The family includes the compatible standards DAB, DAB+ and DMB digital radio and DMB mobile TV. Collectively these are often referred to as the Eureka 147 Family of Standards, having originated as an EU funded Eureka project. The system is on-air in nearly 40 countries across Europe, Australia and the Far East. More than 500 million people are within range of DAB, DAB+ or DMB services, with over 1,000 services on-air. In Europe, digital radio is available in the UK, Denmark, Malta, Norway, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland and Spain with digital radio launches planned for France, Ireland, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands and Czech Republic. The world's first DMB mobile TV services launched in South Korea in 2005 and is now one of the most successful markets in the world. DAB is also on-air in China as the only industrial standard for digital radio and was successfully used for mobile TV during the 2008 Olympics. DMB mobile TV is currently on-air in Norway as part of the 'Mini-TV' project. Other DMB mobile TV services and trials are planned for Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan, and Indonesia. In 2008 the industry body responsible for the Eureka 147 family of standards, the WorldDMB Forum, created the 'Digital Radio Receiver Profiles' which specify a set of minimum requirements and features for different types of consumer digital radio receivers. The Receiver Profiles ensure interoperability of new receivers and services between countries whose broadcasters may be using different combinations of DAB, DAB+ or DMB and creates a harmonised digital radio and multimedia market across the world.

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.