

## New Czech Radio projects launched for digital broadcasting

The public service broadcaster is the leader in digital audio broadcasting. From 1 March, the selection of digital audio broadcasting (DAB) will be expanded to include new projects of Czech Radio. Owners of digital audio devices will be able to listen to three new stations, two of which have been up until now limited to online broadcasting: Czech Radio – Radio Junior, Czech Radio Jazz and Czech Radio Plus. The news was officially announced by the representatives of Czech Radio at a seminar focusing on the modern method of audio signal broadcasting held on Thursday at the Chamber of Deputies.

**Radio Junior** is a station broadcasting programmes for children up to 12 years of age and was launched by Czech Radio on 1 November 2012. It offers a selection of the best Czech and Slovak programmes for children ranging from fairy tales to adventurous reading series. The programme is free of advertising and the shows are mixed with upbeat songs and funny exercises, such as for Czech grammar. For more information, visit [www.radiojunior.cz](http://www.radiojunior.cz).

**Czech Radio Jazz** (currently Eurojazz) is a programme focused on high quality jazz that encompasses a large variety of genres from jazz's early days to contemporary fusions. Although the station also appeals to fans of older jazz genres (swing, hard-bop), its selection includes mostly contemporary and mainly European production. An integral feature of the station's production is its extensive website. For more information, visit [jazz.rozhlas.cz](http://jazz.rozhlas.cz).

**Czech Radio Plus** is a spoken word broadcast with emphasis on quality journalism, analytical approach and discussion-based programmes. The station will not play any music and its launch is planned on 1 March.

*“Czech Radio is ready for digital broadcasting in terms of both its technical facilities and its programme. In March, a new station called Czech Radio Plus will be launched. Digital broadcasting is further complemented by Radio Junior and Czech Radio Jazz. However, future development requires the cooperation of all interested parties – the state, broadcasters, network operators, producers and distributors of receivers. Following the example of foreign public service radios, we want to become a leader in the field of digital broadcasting. We know that this is our responsibility and that this is what the public expects”,* says **Peter Duhan**, General Director of Czech Radio.

In recent weeks, the digital audio signal has quickly spread to new regions of the Czech Republic. It is currently available to approximately 50% of Czech inhabitants. Digital networks are powered by three operators which have obtained the appropriate permission from the Czech Telecommunication Office. Up to 15 stations are available to audiences in Prague, Brno and surrounding areas, Eastern Bohemia, around Příbram and also in the Plzeň, Liberec, Central Bohemian, Moravian-Silesian, České Budějovice and Karlovy Vary Regions. On the day of the seminar, new transmitters were put into operation in the Ústí nad Labem Region and in Prague.

At Thursday's seminar held in cooperation with the Electoral Committee of the Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Republic, Czech Radio also introduced four key requirements for successful completion of the implementation of digital broadcasting:

- The government should announce a schedule for the development of terrestrial digital radio broadcasting including a specific deadline for the completion of the transfer from analog to digital broadcasting.
- Czech Radio should permanently obtain frequencies for digital broadcasting and should become, like Czech Television, the operator of its own public service multiplex.
- Digital TV broadcasting has proven that it would be appropriate to use a national body which would be able to efficiently coordinate the steps taken by all individual entities. Following this example, the parties involved should establish the National Association for Digital Audio Broadcasting (NA DAB) comprising - in addition to the representatives of Czech Radio - ministries and governmental offices, licence holders, car producers, operators, electronic appliance dealers, etc.
- The state has to motivate private operators. An amendment to the law on broadcasting could, for example, loosen the rules regarding the ownership of digital stations.

In addition to Czech Radio, other commercial entities also expressed their support of digital broadcasting during the seminar: Lagardère Active CR (holder of the first historical digital licence) and the dance music radio station, SeeJay Radio. A unilateral resolution in favour of DAB was also adopted by the Council for Radio and Television Broadcasting.

The event that took place at the Chamber of Deputies will be followed by an international conference on digital radio broadcasting planned by Czech Radio for the autumn of this year as part of the celebrations of the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of radio broadcasting in the Czech lands.