
The future of radio broadcasting in Switzerland is digital

"DigiMig" working group publishes report on switchover from FM to DAB+

Bern, 1 December 2014 – Chaired by the Federal Office of Communications (OFCOM), a working group made up of representatives of SRG and Switzerland's privately-owned radio stations has drawn up a scenario for the long-term switchover from analogue (FM) to digital (DAB+) radio broadcasting. Representatives of the working group today submitted their vision to Federal Councillor Doris Leuthard, Head of DETEC.

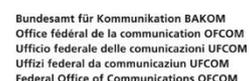
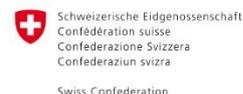
The "DigiMig" report sets out a possible route from FM to DAB+ with 15 concrete recommendations. In the working group's view, radio stations throughout Switzerland should be broadcast first and foremost digitally via DAB+ by 2024 at the latest, and the analogue FM transmitters phased out. It proposes two main phases for the switchover:

Phase 1 would run until 2019. The report provides for specific marketing and communications measures, for example, to promote digital radio listening at home and in the car. The new Radio and Television Act (RTVA) will also give the technology a significant boost. This phase will be accompanied by a dedicated programme of audience research.

Phase 2 provides for the phased switchoff of FM transmitters between 2020 and 2024, coordinated by region. The radio sector wishes to take independent responsibility for this process, and is currently drafting the corresponding agreement.

The migration report is intended to serve the authorities and the radio broadcasters themselves as the basis for defining the Swiss radio sector of the future. It puts into practice the digital radio broadcasting strategy which the Federal Council drew up as long ago as 2006. The strategy found that, as the last analogue element of an otherwise digitised radio world, FM had reached its capacity limits. Its technical potential has been exhausted, and there have been no unoccupied, usable FM frequencies available in Switzerland for many years now. Even today, SRG radio stations – as well as more than half of those that are privately owned – are broadcast via DAB+ in parallel with FM. Some stations are exclusively digital.

In the spring of 2013, the radio industry joined forces with OFCOM to form the Digital Migration (DigiMig) working group. In addition to OFCOM, the group comprises representatives of the VSP association of Swiss private radio stations, the RRR association which represents regional radio stations in French-speaking Switzerland, the Unikom union of non-commercial local radio stations, SRG, the automotive industry, and other sectors.



Further reading

(available at www.bakom.admin.ch/themen/radio_tv/01214/02292/04666/index.html?lang=en)

- Summary of final report: 15 measures for digital migration
- Final report of the Digital Migration working group

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