

Radio reception to be entirely digital in four years

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Digital radio is developing rapidly: digital radio reception is already available in almost all Swiss households. The "DigiMig working group" therefore considers an exit from FM as of 2021 to be realistic.

In its concluding report dated December 2014, the Digital Migration working group (AG DigiMig) proposed a switch in radio transmission from FM to DAB+ between 2020 and 2024. The digital radio standard DAB+ is the successor to analogue FM transmission and is provided free of charge via an antenna to users. DAB stands for Digital Audio Broadcasting, the + for superior sound, greater reception, wider variety and new possibilities.

The report also defines basic criteria for a switch from FM to DAB+. Given the positive development of digital radio, these criteria will soon have been met.

DAB+ and Internet together replacing FM

At the end of 2017, 39% of radio programmes in Switzerland were still transmitted via FM. Digital radio reception via DAB+, cable and IP TV networks and the Internet is already available in almost all Swiss households. 85% of new cars sold in Switzerland are equipped with DAB+. Most countries in Europe are already preparing for DAB+.

Switzerland is going digital

Given the positive trend, the DigiMig working group assumes that the exit from FM can commence in 2021 and be completed in 2022. Current service gaps relating to DAB+ will have been eliminated by then, especially in all major road tunnels. It is also foreseeable that all new vehicles sold in Switzerland by that date will feature DAB+ or other digital reception technologies. A number of retrofit options are already available for existing vehicles.

National changeover plan being developed

By the end of 2018, the DigiMig working group - in cooperation with all stakeholder groups - will draw up a national timetable for the changeover from FM to DAB+. The aim is to publish it in 2019.

"Digital Migration" working group (AG DigiMig)

In the spring of 2013, the radio industry joined forces with the Federal Office of Communications OFCOM to form the Digital Migration (DigiMig) working group. In addition to OFCOM, it 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, Swiss public broadcaster SRG SSR, the automotive industry, and other sectors.

In Switzerland, digital radio will then replace analogue FM reception. At the end of 2014, DigiMig presented a scenario for the analogue–digital switch-over to the Swiss Federal Council. SRG and almost all private radio stations already transmit their programmes via DAB+ in parallel to FM, and many of them broadcast solely via digital channels.

Additional information

<https://www.bakom.admin.ch/bakom/en/homepage/electronic-media/technology/digital-transmission/radio-industry-sets-a-course-to-phase-out-fm.html>

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

Contact for questions

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