



ComCom press release

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Additional licence for DAB+ in French-speaking Switzerland awarded to DABCOM AG

On 13 May 2019 ComCom granted another DAB+ radiocommunication licence for digital broadcasting of radio programme services in French-speaking Switzerland. With DABCOM AG, ComCom selected the highest scoring candidate, particularly in relation to the criteria of media diversity and economic efficiency.

Subject to any appeal against ComCom's decision, DABCOM AG will construct and operate a DAB+ platform in French-speaking Switzerland with a diverse offering of commercial and alternative programming. This will also include programming which is geared towards promoting a company and its products and services. This media format, which until now has not been tried on the Swiss radio market, is achieving extensive coverage in the print and TV sector. In this context, ComCom does not just see an extension to the diversity of offerings: the fact that DABCOM AG is also counting on a new circle of financially strong customers who are not dependent on subsidies or revenue from the radio advertising market is expected to contribute to the economic viability of the DABCOM platform without substantially endangering the existing radio landscape.

In the interests of diversity, ComCom has limited the number of company radio stations to six. When allocating the other twelve available places, the licensee must ensure a diverse offering which takes into consideration informative, cultural, educational and entertainment elements. It is also committed to giving priority to broadcasters from French-speaking Switzerland. It will also permanently reserve one place for short-term programming, e.g. in connection with cultural events.

DABCOM AG is a company from western Switzerland which has yet to be founded. It will be supported on the one hand by IP worldcom SA, a company from Waadt canton specialising in internet solutions, and on the other hand by representatives of Digris AG. The latter is a company which has been constructing and operating local DAB+ transmitter networks since May 2014 in larger conurbations throughout Switzerland, including five in French-speaking Switzerland. Both companies therefore have the necessary experience for constructing and



operating another DAB+ platform. DABCOM is planning gradual construction of the transmitter network; coverage extending across the whole French-speaking part of Switzerland is expected by mid-2024.

Clarification of interest and invitation to tender

ComCom's tender procedure in May 2018 took place following a clarification of interest in additional DAB+ platforms which OFCOM had carried out in 2016. The objective of the tender procedure was to strengthen media diversity with the aid of new, diversified and innovative content and formats without neglecting economic aspects. Romandie Médias SA, which already operates a DAB+ platform primarily for the existing regional radio stations in French-speaking Switzerland, and DABCOM AG responded to the invitation to tender. On the basis of a criteria-based competition and following a hearing with both candidates, ComCom has decided on the award of the licence to DABCOM AG.

DAB+ in Switzerland

DAB+ (Digital Audio Broadcasting) is a broadcasting technology for broadcasting radio programme services digitally. Switzerland is one of Europe's leading DAB+ countries; today more than 100 radio stations can already be received in the country, many of them not only in a single linguistic region but throughout Switzerland. DAB+ has advantages over FM: It offers a substantially greater variety of stations and larger coverage areas; the sound quality is better and reception is clearer. This is why the radio industry wishes to switch off FM broadcasting by 2024 at the latest.

A maximum of 18 stations can broadcast simultaneously on one DAB+ platform. Today the SSR SRG operates one platform in each of the four regions of the country. There are transmitter networks for private radio stations in German-speaking Switzerland (SwissMediaCast) and in French-speaking Switzerland (Romandie Médias SA). In addition, Digris AG broadcasts not-for-profit FM and web radio stations via DAB+ in all the major conurbations in Switzerland.

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Enclosure:

- Radiocommunication licence for the FCH 04 DAB+ transmitter network (DABCOM AG; *in French or German only*)

Further information: see OFCOM website <https://www.bakom.admin.ch/bakom/en/homepage/electronic-media/technology/digital-transmission/comcom-launches-invitation-to-tender-for-new-dab-network-for-french-speaking-switzerland.html>