

Prague 09/03/2015

DAB Is Not the Future, DAB Is Happening Now!

Czech Radio has prepared a detailed plan for its digital broadcasting output. Its digital projects are made up of the radio stations D-dur, Radio Wave, Plus, Rádio Junior, Jazz, Rádio Retro and the special Sport service. This year, Czech Radio will showcase its commitment to going digital by launching an experimental digital radio service for Prague, which will reach 10 to 15 per cent of the national population.

“As a public service medium, Czech Radio has been and will be at the helm of the development of digital radio broadcasting. Our long-term project clearly indicates that we are now prepared to transition to DAB,” says **Peter Duhan**, Director General of Czech Radio.

Seven steps towards digital broadcasting

- **Legislation**

Requirements include: designation of a separate public service **multiplex** for Czech Radio; to allocate frequencies and set up a strategy for regional broadcasting; to efficiently allocate **frequencies** to commercial subjects; to **liberalise the market** and eliminate restrictions regarding the number of nationwide stations permitted by sole radio operators; and to **motivate** electronics and car dealers.

- **National coordination**

A clear plan is to be followed during **state coordination** of the process, observing the **switch-off** date of analogue broadcasting. Czech Radio will be the leader in the digitisation process. A national **coordination group** will be formed and a “Digitisation Timetable” – in order to define a technical plan for the transition. **Without state coordination** it will be necessary to wait for **market demand** and the switch-off and related digitisation process will take up to two decades – with unpredictable development and financial costs.

- **Financing of simultaneous broadcasting**

The issue of “simulcast” must be addressed: by increasing the **licence fee** by 5% and maintaining it to cover the digitisation process; by a planned budget loss covered from the **VAT refund**; based on an **amendment to the VAT Act** with the possibility to claim VAT deduction; and using a specific-purpose **state subsidy**.

- **Engagement of private broadcasters**

Based on experience from abroad, the **cooperation** of both these **sectors** within the dual system is essential for successful transition. Current **licences** are valid until **2025**.

- **Attractive content and new services**

Services with **additional data** (such as EPG) must be supported, designated radio **stations** developed, and **new projects** (for example, CR Sport Rock) prepared with a focus on **multimedia** and production of thematic projects, additional data and **applications**. Other

projects include the preparation of a multi-channel programme **strategy**, personalised offline content (4G LTE networks) and **experimental programmes**.

- **Information and marketing campaign**

If supported by the state, the campaign will run according to the plan, **switch-off** date and under the management of the national coordination group, through which Czech Radio will play an **active** role. **In the absence of state support**, our massive marketing campaign, which will create a **new market segment** will depend on Czech Radio's resources. The potential of upcoming significant **events** is to be leveraged (for example, Olympic Games in Rio 2016 vs CR Sport Rock).

- **Receivers and car stereos for DAB**

Legislative support must be provided to ensure sufficient **supply** of receivers in the market. **Car** producers and major electronics **dealers** are to be involved, and marketing activities interconnected.

Proposed digital broadcasting timetable

Czech Radio has also prepared a timetable for migration to digital broadcasting. During pilot digital broadcasting in the first period between 2015 and 2017, the major metropolitan areas will be covered – Prague, Brno, Ostrava and Plzeň.

In 2017, regular digital broadcasting including regular service to all nationwide stations, special digital programmes and projects, is to be launched. Regional broadcasting will depend on technical conditions and frequency specifications.

The termination of analogue broadcasting would then finally mark the end of the transition process. This should occur no later than 2025 on the condition that all Czech Radio's programmes go fully digital.

All information relating to digital broadcasting and Czech Radio's plan are available on www.digitalniradio.cz

Jiří Hošna

Spokesperson

Tel: 725 793 397

E-mail: jiri.hosna@rozhlas.cz