

Press Release 16th October, 2009

Boosted Interest in HD Radio™-Technology

On the occasion of the 3rd HD Radio™ Day on 15th October, 2009, in Lucerne, Switzerland, the organizing European HD-Radio-Alliance (EHDRA) welcomed 100 experts and regulators from ten countries. Renowned speakers from various markets shared the latest tendencies and achievements for the digital transmission of radio programmes. The main focus was on opportunities and stakes for private commercial broadcasters.

1st September 2010 was announced as the launch date for HD Radio services operated by Swiss private commercial radio broadcasters. Furthermore, participants were shown the wide range of HD receivers and were able to field-test HD reception themselves by driving a test car across the Lucerne area.

International HD Radio™-Day Lucerne

The third HD Radio™ Day took place on 15th October, 2009, at the Continental Park Hotel in Lucerne, Switzerland. Various speakers presented recent developments and achievements of HD Radio™. Many presentations focused on the upcoming operational start-up of HD Radio™ in Europe. Speakers from Clear Channel (Len Konecny) and Cox Radio (Steve Fluker) shared their experiences with HD Radio™ in the U.S. where the technology was introduced a number of years ago.

A variety of test vehicles were at the participants' disposal to get an impression of HD Radio™-Technology's advantages on the road. A presentation of receivers showed that there is already a wide range of devices available on the world-wide market, reaching from powerful home stereo hi-fi-systems to car radios and portable devices. HD Radio™ receivers are even incorporated in the new Microsoft media player ZUNE and the Insignia Walk-Radio.

Several experts who were involved in the numerous field tests in Europe (D/F/CH/RO/UKR/PL/CZ) during the last three years confirmed that HD Radio™ for private broadcasters can easily be implemented in these countries on the basis of the existing FM network infrastructure, generally with only few and small adaptations needed. Nevertheless, a number of administrations as well as the public service broadcasters gathered in the EBU still make formal and regulatory reservations against the implementation of HD Radio™ in Europe. The European HD Radio™ Alliance (EHDRA) is actively involved in the clarification of these questions, e.g. as a member of the ECC working group FM PT 45.

The Swiss Regulator OFCOM chose a pragmatic approach, as OFCOM's head of department Marcel Regnotto explained in his welcoming speech. Switzerland is planning to introduce a dual system for digital radio broadcasting, by having the public service broadcaster and new private stations (targeting at a complete linguistic region) transmit their programmes on DAB+, while the existing - exclusively local or regional - FM stations digitize their programmes using their FM frequency. The latter's new programme licences already include the right to digitally simulcast the original programme on FM, under so-called Secondary Service Terms. A regulation allowing additional programmes and data services will shortly be adopted by the Swiss Government.

In the coming weeks, a task force of 4 to 7 leading Swiss private stations will start the concrete planning of the operational implementation of HD Radio™ in Switzerland. Their objective is to launch the first commercial HD services on the air on 1st September, 2010. The definite go/no go-decision will be made in April 2010, based on the results of the current planning activities.

Generally, the digitization of radio broadcasting Europe resembles rather a stuck evolution than a revolution. Especially for private broadcasters there is no sure formula that would offer a solution for digitization which can actually be refinanced from the market. The representative of the leading German radio association VPRT, Sebastian Artymiak, stated that Germany is still far away from a digitization of radio broadcasting, as DAB+ (favoured by the public service broadcasters) is not an appropriate solution for the majority of private stations.

At the time being, HD Radio™ represents by far the most inexpensive option for the digitization of radio broadcasting (besides IP-radio, which however cannot replace a digital terrestrial distribution for licenced radio broadcasters). At one go, local and regional stations for the first time get the possibility to broadcast additional complementary programmes in their licenced area. These benefits were made very clear during the HD Radio™ event.

Pictures and presentations of the international HD Radio™-Day in Lucerne can be downloaded at: www.ehdra.eu

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HD Radio™ is a digital technology highly compatible with the common analogue FM-technology. On the same FM frequency, a digital signal is added to the analogue FM signal, simulcasting the same programme digitally. Furthermore, additional complementary digital programmes can be added, still on the same frequency. FM HD Radio™ is at this time the most promising and the least expensive option for digitizing the broadcasts of local and regional radio stations. For further information, please contact www.ehdra.eu or www.hd-radio.ch.

HD Radio™ is a registered trademark of iBiquity Digital Corp.