[AT] Digitisation Plan Published

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On 5 February 2004 the Austrian broadcasting regulator, Kommunikationsbehörde Austria (KommAustria) published the digitisation plan for the introduction of digital terrestrial television. The plan, which is based on Art. 21.5 of the Privatfernsehgesetz (Private Television Act), comprises the strategy proposed by KommAustria for the introduction of digital terrestrial television (DVB-T) throughout Austria, as well as a timetable for its implementation.

According to the plan, the transition will take place in four stages. The first (preparatory) phase, which began in 2003 and will conclude at the end of 2005, comprises frequency planning and coordination, as well as the setting up of DVB-T test operations. In early 2005, alongside preparatory investigations and studies, the invitation of tenders for multiplex provision will be prepared and issued. In the second phase in 2006, the main task will be to build up the network in the main conurbations. This will be carried out by the multiplex licence-holder. The aim is to reach 60% of the population one year after the licence comes into force. Between 2007 and 2010, the third stage will involve the regional transition, with analogue frequencies being switched off. Both analogue and digital signals will be transmitted in individual regions for 6 to 12 months, with programme providers involved in the switchover process. From 2010, the fourth stage will comprise the invitation of tenders and allocation of additional multiplex platforms. The objective is to reach more than 90% of the population (fixed antennae) with one multiplex service, with another two or three platforms reaching 70% with fixed antennae and 40% with portable indoor antennae (TV reception in homes using a small aerial). Any additional services will depend on their economic feasibility.

According to KommAustria, the digitisation plan represents the publication of the Austrian transition strategy required by the eEurope 2005 Action Plan.

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