[CZ] Updated Digital TV Plan

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The Czech Republic is likely to introduce digital terrestrial television this year, or by 2005 at the latest.

In January this year, by the decision of the Broadcasting Council, the DVB-T licences (Digital Video Broadcasting Terrestrial) were extended for 2004. These licences are currently held by the Czech Digital Group and Ceske Radiokommunikace. Digital broadcasts by these two companies can be received in and around the capital city, Prague. This is a trial service, carrying the channels operated by the Czech analogue terrestrial TV companies.

The Ministerstvo informatiky (Ministry for Information Technology) has recently proposed an updated plan for the transition to digital terrestrial broadcasting in the Czech Republic. It states that two digital terrestrial TV multiplexes should be established by the end of 2004. Each multiplex will carry four television channels. There is already sufficient capacity for one multiplex, covering 65% of the population, and for a second multiplex with 50% coverage. These coverage rates will rise further so that up to 70% of the population can be reached by 2006. Frequency capacities will be allocated by the Czech Telecommunications Authority (CTU), while the Broadcasting Council is responsible for programming issues. The plan makes no provision for a separate multiplex for public service broadcasters. Each multiplex will include one public service channel. The date of the final switch-off of analogue signals has not been fixed. To begin with, radio will not be included in digital broadcasting. The multiplex operators must provide an electronic programme guide (EPG). Programme information services that are closely related to programmes broadcast will be treated as broadcasting. Under the capacity distribution between broadcasting and information services, non-programme-related services will represent approximately 12% of the multiplex capacity. In order to support digital TV, set-top boxes will be subject to a reduced level of VAT.

Aktualizovaná koncepce prechodu na zemské digitální rozhlasové a televizní vysílání v Ceské republice, press release of the Ministry for Information Technology, 20/01/2004

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Updated plan for the transition to digital broadcasting in the Czech Republic, press release of the Ministry for Information Technology, 20 January 2004

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