[LV] Cable Broadcaster Starts Digital Broadcasting

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SIA Baltkom TV, one of the largest cable broadcasters in Latvia, has recently started broadcasting in digital format. In May 2004 the company had launched already digital broadcasting programs in its cable networks in Riga. On 24 September 2004 the company switched its MMDS (Multichanel Multipoint Distribution System) broadcasting technology to the digital format. Digital television can be received within a 50 km range of Riga, where the television broadcasting tower is located. The offer includes 49 television channels and 6 radio channels. In order to access the new service consumers must become subscribers of SIA Baltkom TV, and have to purchase the decoding device . Currently the number of subscribers of the new service totals up to 2000 households, but the company hopes that this number will increase to 15,000 within the year 2005.

Digital broadcasting services with MMDS technology are not considered as terrestrial television although they do not involve cable. This is due to the Latvian legislation that provides that for DVB-T the COFDM standard shall be used.

SIA Baltkom TV has received its license as a cable television broadcaster. The National Broadcasting Council is currently of the opinion that there are no changes needed as regards the digital format, for the frequency resources that are used are the same as for the analog format.

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