[CZ] Switch to DVB - T

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The Czech Republic is planning to introduce digital terrestrial television in the near future (see IRIS 2004-3: 6). In November 2004, the Broadcasting Council invited tenders for two DVB-T networks. Previously, temporary licences to provide DVB-T services on a trial basis in the Prague and Brno areas had been granted to the Czech Digital Group, Ceske Radiokommunikace and Cesky Telecom. By the end of 2004, three multiplexes for digital terrestrial television had been established. The call for tenders relates to two multiplexes, each carrying four TV channels and several radio stations. The third multiplex is reserved for public service broadcasters. Under the current technical transmission infrastructure, the first multiplex covers 65% of the population, while the other two each cover around 50%. These coverage rates will increase and could all reach up to 70% in 2006. Radio channels will be dealt with at a later date, since they require less preparation time. The Czech Republic has a relatively high proportion of terrestrial connection points. Less than 20% of households can receive cable and satellite channels. This situation has contributed to the rapid development of digital terrestrial TV. Digital terrestrial transmission capacities will be allocated by the Broadcasting Council as the regulatory body. The deadline for applications was 21 December 2004. More than 30 candidates applied, representing over 50 channels. The authority will grant licences in accordance with criteria set out in the Broadcasting Act, taking into account diversity of opinion across the whole range of channels. No company has a legal right to a licence. Licences will be valid for 12 years. Frequencies are due to be allocated at the end of February 2005. The successful companies should begin broadcasting no later than 360 days after being granted their licence. The switch to DVB-T is expected to be made in the Czech Republic by the end of 2005 or early 2006.

Broadcasting Council press release

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