

[CZ] Digital Television Developments

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The Czech Republic has begun the process of introducing digital television (and radio).

On 21 October 2005, digital transmission was launched via the country's first multiplex. Three public service channels operated by Czech Television and one commercial channel (TV NOVA) are now being broadcast. Several digital radio stations are also available. In December 2005, two more DVB-T network licences were granted by the Broadcasting Council. The broadcasters are required to launch their services within one year. Previously, only temporary DVB-T licences had been granted.

A radio service involving several public service and commercial channels is currently being tested in and around Prague by T-DAB and Digital Radio Mondial (DRM). DVB-H (Digital Video Broadcast Handheld) was tested at the INVEX trade fair in Brno in November 2005. This involved the transmission of four TV channels as well as interactive services.

The Czech Parliament has not yet adopted the necessary legislative framework for the introduction of digital terrestrial television. The legislative process has long been shrouded in controversy. Additional multiplexes for further commercial services are in the pipeline. In 2006, digital channels are expected to reach up to 70% of the population, although there is still no fixed date for the switch-off of analogue frequencies. This will depend on the technical accessibility of digital services and should take place by 2010 at the latest.

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Information available at:

<http://www.tapmag.cz/etapmag/etapmag.html>

