[HU] National Communications Authority Announces Tender for Digital Broadcasting

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On 25 March 2008, the National Communications Authority of Hungary (NCAH) announced an international tender for the operation rights of five terrestrial digital television broadcasting networks and a digital radio broadcasting network in the VHF range. According to the NCAH plans, the results of the bids shall be announced in the summer of 2008.

In order to make digital switchover possible, invitations to bids for national terrestrial digital television broadcasting (DVB-T) and terrestrial digital radio broadcasting (T-DAB) have been announced by the NCAH with the approval of the designated *ad hoc* committee of the Hungarian Parliament, and in line with the results of the professional consultations carried out in February this year.

In accordance with Act LXXIV of 2007 on digital switchover (Digital Switchover Act), the successful bidders of both the television broadcasting and radio broadcasting tenders will be granted multiplex operation rights for a period of 12 years.

According to the bid invitations, successful bidders will decide on the compression method to be used and will determine, if other programmes, in addition to public service programmes, will be available for free, or only for a subscription fee, as part of television multiplex services. It is also for the future multiplex operator to decide which channels, apart from those stipulated both in the Digital Switchover Act and the bid invitations, will be available from the very start of multiplex services and which other channels will be included in the programme range at a later time.

According to the invitation for bids, terrestrial radio and television broadcasting must be launched on two multiplexes in 2008, whereas the successful bidder may also offer mobile TV (Digital Video Broadcasting - Handheld - DVB-H) services using the third television multiplex. Broadcast via the other two television multiplexes can be launched once the currently available nation-wide terrestrial analogue broadcasting has been terminated.

Both the audio and video multiplexes, after both networks have been fully completed, must be available to 94 percent of the Hungarian population. As far as audio broadcasting is concerned, the planned date of digital switchover is the end

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of 2014.

Bidders can submit their offers by 11 a.m. on 24 April 2008 at the latest.

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