[ES] Soria Completes Analogue Switch-Off

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Digital switchover was achieved in Soria (province of the Autonomous Community of Castilla-León) at 12:00 on 23 July 2008, making it the first Spanish province to complete the switch-off of the analogue terrestrial television platform. Soria's pilot project has benefited more than 51,000 inhabitants – 54% of the population of the province – and approximately 18,500 households.

The city of Soria was selected in 2005 for a DTT pilot intended to expose any implementation issues. In October 2006, it was confirmed that switch-off in the province would take place in 2008 and in September 2007 the project was integrated with the National Plan for the Transition to Digital Terrestrial Television approved by the cabinet.

The timetable implies that analogue switch-off will take place in four phases from 2008 until April 2010. Migration will be progressively implemented in the 73 technical areas in which the country was "divided" by the National Technical Plan on DTTV (see IRIS 2005-9: 9). The areas sum up a total of 90 transition projects, each involving a certain number of inhabitants. Soria's switch-off is part of the first phase that will affect 1% of the whole population with 31 December 2008 as the deadline. That is why, even though the province Soria is leading the switchover, the first attempt had already taken place in April in the town of A Fonsagrada (Galicia).

Soria's pilot project was developed with an overall EUR 1 million budget aid approved by the European Commission. The Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Trade was allowed on 25 September 2007 to distribute subsidies to help finance the acquisition of MHP digital receivers and the adaptation of collective aerials. Citizens had until 30 June to apply for EUR 60 to purchase a receiver and EUR 15 for its installation, whereas EUR 450 could be obtained per building for the conversion of collective antenna systems. Additionally, Impulsa TDT, the pro DTT association, distributed free set-top boxes to low-income households through Caritas and the Red Cross.

During the transition period, a communication campaign took place to prepare citizens for the change. Since February 2007, emphasis was placed on ensuring households were informed about the advantages of DTT, the necessity to upgrade equipment and the existence of a help scheme. Communication measures included coverage maps, brochures and advertisements in regional media. A

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dedicated website was designed (www.soriatdt.es) and two information centres were opened in the region (Soria and Almazán).

Decisión of the Cabinet of Ministers approving the National Plan for the Transition to Digital Terrestrial Television, 7 September 2007

Ayuda para la adquisición de decodificadores digitales y la adaptación de las antenas en Soria. Ayuda de Estado N 103/2007. Diario Oficial de la Unión Europea. 2007/C 262/01

http://ec.europa.eu/community_law/state_aids/comp-2007/n103-07.pdf

State aid for the acquisition of digital receivers and the adaptation of aerials in Soria. State aid N 103/2007. Official Journal of the European Union, 2007/C 262/01

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