

EBU

OPERATING EUROVISION AND EURORADIO

MARKET REPORT **DIGITAL RADIO 2016**

MEDIA INTELLIGENCE SERVICE
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ABOUT THIS PROJECT

The Digital Radio 2016 report is the first of a yearly report that the Media Intelligence Service of the EBU plans to publish to support the EBU's [Digital Radio Initiative](#).

Built upon the experience of the [Digital Radio Toolkit](#), which examined the key success factors for radio digitization, the Digital Radio report highlights the main achievements of the previous year for digital radio, pointing out both its strengths and the areas that require action. As a whole, it offers a progress report of the roll-out of digital terrestrial radio in European markets and, when relevant, other digital platforms.

By doing this, it helps EBU Members and other stakeholders to plan their digital radio strategies and supports their advocacy initiatives. Ultimately, it supports their efforts to bring terrestrial digital radio to their territories, providing them with the data, the latest developments, a selection of best practices and a market analysis.

METHODOLOGY

This project relies on a systematic collection from different sources, including:

- Official statistics from broadcasters, governments, regulatory authorities and industry trade bodies, both national and international (e.g. WorldDAB, DRM Consortium).
- Information and analysis from the trade press and experts.
- Personal communications from industry stakeholders such as EBU Members, regulatory authorities, network operators, manufacturers and industry trade bodies.

For the benefit of readers, sources have not been included systematically but are available for any EBU Member on request.

All the insights provided have been analysed according to the best data and information available at the moment the report was written (January 2016). What appears in the report is a summary of key developments.

For details of sources and additional data and explanations please contact the Media Intelligence Service (mis@ebu.ch).

HIGHLIGHTS

CONTENT AND OFFER
TECHNOLOGY
SWITCHOVER PROCESS
POLICY AND REGULATION
INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE
PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS
CONSUMER ELECTRONICS
CAR INDUSTRY



CONTENT AND OFFER

EUROPE DRAMATIC EXPANSION IN REGIONAL AND LOCAL SERVICES

Netherlands launched regional services, already expanding in Italy and Norway, while the UK started to roll-out the expansion plan for local DAB, also planned in France. Ultra-local services expanded in Switzerland while tested in the UK and Poland.

DENMARK DIGITAL RADIO BREATHES NEW LIFE INTO RADIO

In 2014 DR unveiled a new multichannel strategy that included the move of some flagship programmes to digital-only stations. As a result, in 2015 DR channels and radio in Denmark saw the first increase in radio consumption in decades, by four minutes.

NETHERLANDS REVAMP TO MAKE THE OFFER ATTRACTIVE

Public broadcaster NPO started 2016 redesigning its station portfolio, launching new digital-only services and shutting down two dozen web radios with low audience figures. Less quantity and more focus to drive listenership to DAB+.

EUROPE BOOM IN POP-UP SERVICES

Rock, country and jazz festivals in Germany and the UK, a piano competition in Poland and a political meeting in Denmark joined the already traditional temporary Christmas and summer stations. In the Czech Republic, Rádio Retro popped up with various topics, from World War II to the history of science.

WORLD WRC GUARANTEES BAND III FOR DIGITAL RADIO

The results of the World Radiocommunication Conference guarantee the availability of enough spectrum in the Band III to roll-out and expand DAB/DAB+ services. This gives certainty and fosters investment and market development.

WORLD APPLE BECOMES A RADIO PLAYER

Apple's first venture into radio, Beats 1, started last June. It is a free streaming radio built on radio personalities. Also Amazon is investing heavily in original audio programming for its Audible service.

EUROPE SWITCH-OFF AM TO FUND DIGITAL RADIO

NPO in the Netherlands, several ARD stations and Deutschlandradio in Germany and some BBC local services switched their AM signal off to move that cost into funding digital radio. Radio France, not yet on DAB+, also ended AM transmissions.

EUROPE SHARED RADIO PLAYERS EXPAND

In April German public radios joined commercial stations in a shared radio player, at the same time that the new joint Irish player was launched. Austria also announced a shared player. In the UK, the Radioplayer trials to include online-only radio stations by current broadcasters.

SWITCHOVER PROCESS

NORWAY

FM TO BE SWITCHED OFF IN 2017

It will become the first country to switch off FM transmissions, at least nationwide. The five criteria established were achieved in 2015 and now everybody is watching them to see how the process works.

EUROPE

VOLUNTARY SWITCHOVER FOR COMMERCIAL RADIO

In September, Klassik Radio in Germany became the first radio station to switch off its analogue frequencies to concentrate on digital distribution. In January 2016, Bauer in Norway switched off the FM signal of Radio Rock and Kiss to save costs.

POLICY AND REGULATION

EUROPE TWO MAJOR COUNTRIES PLAN DIGITAL RADIO LICENSING

Regulators in France and Italy cleared the way for digital radio in their countries, publishing the areas to be licenced. France plans to allocate licences during the next eight years while Italy has already started to grant regional licences.

SWEDEN

PUTS THE BRAKE ON DIGITAL RADIO

Despite the joint commitment of public and commercial radio, a clear roadmap and the commercial licences already awarded, the Swedish government decided to postpone the development of a digital terrestrial radio network.

INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE

EUROPE

INDUSTRY BODIES TO BOOST DIGITAL RADIO

Last March, industry trade bodies from several European countries announced a joint initiative to coordinate their promotion campaigns and to share information. A joint European logo for digital radio, already shared in Germany, Italy and Austria, is being studied.

CZECH REPUBLIC

SHARED AMBITIONS

In March, public broadcaster Český Rozhlas presented a plan for the transition to digital radio as the basis for an official roadmap, including measures for itself as well as for commercial broadcasters. The debate has started and collaboration is required.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

NETHERLANDS

FOCUS ON PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

Digital Radio NL coordinated the campaign Let's get digital and the Digital Radio Week, giving away presents such as DAB+ radio sets or a car equipped with a DAB+ radio receiver. Since April the manufacturer Tivoli Audio organizes the Digital Radio Tivoli Audio Tour to provide dealers with information and demos about DAB+.

EUROPE

HIGH-LEVEL REPRESENTATIVES BACK DIGITAL RADIO

In November, the British and German ministers of communications called for European cooperation to foster digital radio. In Belgium Flemish the Minister is already a big supporter and states it publicly. This kind of high-level messages are especially encouraging for industry stakeholders and as a hook for external players to join.

CONSUMER ELECTRONICS

GERMANY

ACCELERATION OF DIGITAL RADIO SALES

From mid-2014 to mid-2015, the total number of radio sets with DAB+ tuners increased by 1.5 million, one million more than FM-only. Devices with IP radio also grew more than FM, with 1.2 million new additions. This translated into an extra million of DAB+ households and two extra million people with access to DAB+.

EUROPE

FALLING PRICES FOR ENTRY-LEVEL DIGITAL RADIO TUNERS

Increasing competition from new players and larger economies of scale are pushing the prices of digital radio down. In the Czech Republic they are as low as EUR 12 while in the UK they can be purchased from GBP 14.99.

CAR INDUSTRY

EUROPE

MORE AND MORE CARS EQUIPPED WITH DIGITAL RADIO AS STANDARD

In the UK, the figure grew 20 points in one year, and 15 in Switzerland. In the Netherlands, only two years after launch the figure was already 15%. This also encourages manufacturers to include digital radio in new markets.

SWITZERLAND

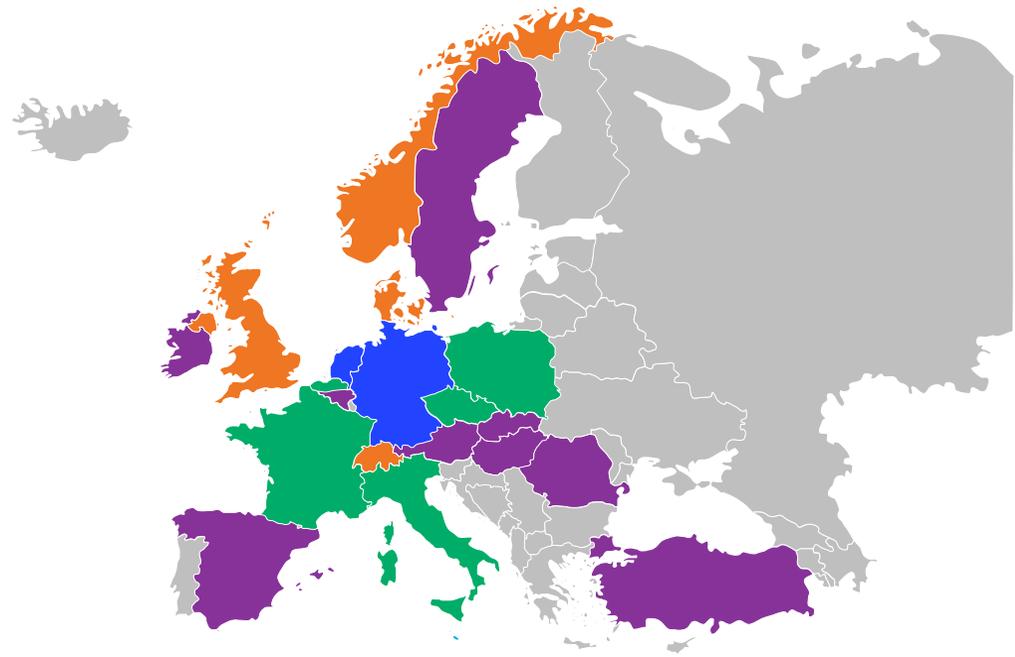
ALIGNMENT OF CAR-RELATED STAKEHOLDERS

The Swiss' Federal Roads Office started to equip 300 motorway tunnels with DAB+, new services such as Traffic Announcement were activated and manufacturers increasingly include DAB+ as standard in new cars, all of them making the case for in-car digital radio listening.

MARKET STATUS



DIGITAL RADIO ROLL-OUT



Digital leaders are those countries that are at the forefront of the implementation of digital radio according to most of the indicators, including extensive coverage, expanded offer of new services and advanced legislation and regulation including criteria and sometimes dates for the switchover.

Digital embracers include those countries where DAB+ has been launched nationally, with exclusive services (different from analogue broadcasting). Receivers are available in the market, promotion campaigns are run and the penetration is growing (at different paces).

Digital newcomers are those countries that have recently launched DAB+ services, with exclusive stations but limited coverage (to specific cities or regions) and limited or no commitment from some stakeholders.

Wait-and-see describes the situation of those countries where regular digital radio services or trials are available but there is nearly no market because of lack of receivers and, generally speaking, lack of commitment from the different stakeholders (this can be seen, for example, in the lack of exclusive services).

leader

Launch date
2002

Analogue switch-off
not scheduled



Number of stations
23

Technical coverage
(2015, % of population)

98%

Penetration of digital receivers
(2014, % of households)

46%

Denmark moved forward with digital radio during 2015. The top achievement was the new roadmap for digital radio published by the Ministry of Culture, which clarifies its roll-out. A possible date for switching off the FM band will only be discussed once 50% of radio listening comes from digital platforms and would take at least two years once that figure has been achieved. According to forecasts by TNS, this could happen by 2021 at least for public broadcaster DR, which caters for three-quarters of the total audience.

Before that, a complete switch from DAB to DAB+ is planned for 2016. It is calculated that around 20% of the more than 1.5 million digital tuners sold between 2005 and 2014 in Denmark are DAB-only and despite a positive evolution the figure is still below 50% of total radio sets sold. Dealing with this issue and increasing the penetration of digital tuners in cars, where 320 000 additional tuners were sold during the same period, are some of the main challenges ahead. For example, only around 14% of cars are equipped with digital radio, as availability is still limited: in 2015, eight of the top-20 selling models were offering no option to include digital radio.

- The Ministry of Culture publishes a new roadmap for digital radio, including criteria for switchover
- Led by DAB, digital radio listening is rapidly growing at the expense of FM
- Public broadcaster DR increases its listening figures for the first time in years thanks to its five digital-only services

The transition from DAB to DAB+ will be accompanied by new services, such as commercial regional stations starting in 2016 and new nationwide commercial services following later. In the case of DR, 2015 was marked by the launch of DAB+ transmissions for its main station P4 and its new multichannel strategy, which has prompted the first increase in radio consumption in decades, four minutes. The move of some flagship programmes, such as Giro 413 and Danmarksmeester, from P4 to digital-only P5 has provided an incentive for the audience to listen to digital radio. As a result, P5 became the 4th most listened-to radio station in 2015 (it was 9th in 2014); its market share increased from 1.9% to 5.2% in just 12 months. The 12.1% of time spent listening to DAB/DAB+ in 2014 had already jumped to 17.1% in the first quarter of 2015. This figure, which was twice the size of Internet radio listening, will probably increase for the whole year when data are released.

For 2016, further extension of the digital share of the market can be expected, consolidating Denmark as one of the leading countries in digital radio.

leader

Launch date
1995

Analogue switch-off
2017

Standard



Number of stations

62

Technical coverage
(2015, % of population)

99%

Penetration of digital receivers
(Q4 2015, % of households)

60%

- Nationwide FM will be switched off during 2017
- Penetration of in-home digital radio devices is at 60%
- More than half of the audience listens to digital radio daily

On 16 April 2015 it was announced that Norway will be the first country to close down FM and switchover to digital radio in 2017. The process will start in January 2017 and take place over a 11-month period, with six regions switching off gradually. In four of these regions, public broadcaster NRK will switch off between two and three months earlier than nationwide commercial and local stations. After 2017, small local stations may continue to broadcast on FM for at least five years.

To successfully achieve this objective, Norway will rely on digital radio coverage that already exceeds FM coverage and a penetration of in-home digital radio of 60% of Norwegian households at the end of 2015. In cars, this figure is still 26%, progressively growing as two-thirds of new cars are sold with digital tuners. Increasing these figures significantly before the switch-off is one of the main challenges ahead, as the 2.8 million DAB-capable devices (1.2 per household) are still unable to compensate for the 7.4 million FM tuners affected by the switch-off. Despite an acceleration of the sales of DAB devices has been noticed at the end of 2015, the switchover will have to rely in all kind of digital receivers.

The main incentive for the 43% of the listeners that only listen to FM to switch to digital radio is the increased and more varied offer, comprising 24 nationwide stations plus 38 local services in six local areas; this means between 29 and 39 services per area. The regulator has planned to expand the local offer through an auction of digital radio frequencies in the first quarter of 2016, with licences valid for 14 years from 1 January 2017. On top of that, since January 2016 the incentive for audiences to switch has been greater given that commercial group Bauer switched off the FM signal of Radio Rock and Kiss one year before expected, in order to save distribution and local programming costs.

At Q4 2015, 57% of the radio audience listened to digital radio daily, six points up year-on-year. Notably, one of the highest penetration rates is among senior citizens (64%) while young people are still behind (48%).

As the switchover date approaches, acceleration in the take-up of digital devices and digital listening already seen at the end of 2015 can be expected, backed by an increased communication effort by trade body Radio Norge. All the European radio industry will be looking at the switchover process in Norway.

SWITZERLAND

leader

Launch date
1999

Analogue switch-off
not scheduled



Number of stations
123

Technical coverage
(2015, % of population)

99%

Penetration of digital receivers
(2015, % of households)

43%

Switzerland is at the forefront of digital radio, with an outdoor coverage of 99% of the population and indoor of 98% that already exceeds FM coverage, an offer of over 60 stations depending on the area and more than two million receivers sold up to 2015. Based on the recommendations of public, commercial and non-profit broadcasters, the government is now expected to take a decision regarding the switch-off date (2024 is the proposal) and the proposed roadmap for switchover.

At regulatory level, a referendum in June backed the new Radio & TV Act, which will allow massive support for covering up to 80% of the simulcast costs and fund communications initiatives for the digital switchover.

This measure clarifies the roadmap for digital radio. In the French- and Italian-speaking parts of the country, public broadcaster SRG SSR offers three digital-only stations, a number that increases to six in the German-speaking part. Most of the FM licensees plus some new services are already available in DAB+, except in the Italian-speaking part, where there is no commercial multiplex yet. On top of that, the local DAB+ islands in Geneva, Zurich and, since November 2015, Lausanne, offer low-cost access to the airwaves to community and ultra-local stations

- 49% of radio listening is digital, half DAB/DAB+ and half internet
- Over 60% of new cars are equipped with digital radio
- An agreement has been reached to equip tunnels on major roads with DAB+ coverage

In Lausanne, for instance, the monthly cost per station is less than EUR 1,000. More local islands are expected to be launched in 2016.

In autumn 2015, the study about digital listening showed that 49% of all radio listening was digital, with DAB/DAB+ and internet equally popular. Digital radio has already overtaken FM at home and at work, with Internet leading at home and DAB/DAB+ at the workplace.

The figures for in-car digital radio are likely to increase gradually. By June 2015, over 60% of new cars were equipped with digital radio and brands such as BMW, Ford, Seat and Toyota fit DAB+ tuners as standard in all the models they sell in Switzerland. This follows the official announcement at the end of 2014 that the Federal Roads Office would equip 300 motorway tunnels with DAB+ by 2018/19 and the availability of Traffic Announcement services in DAB+ since April 2015.

In 2016, the increase in sales of devices and the communications effort, since March 2015 backed by an agreement between public and commercial broadcasters, should result in increased penetration and use of digital radio.

UNITED KINGDOM

leader

Launch date
1995

Analogue switch-off
not scheduled



Number of stations
283

Technical coverage
(Oct. 2015, % of households)

96%

Penetration of digital receivers
(H2 2015, % of households)

54%

Thirty million people listen to digital radio each week (Q4 2015), which is 56% of the population; only senior citizens and lower socio-economic groups are below this average. Listening to analogue radio fell by six points in one year and stood at just 50% by the third quarter of the year. Digital was at 41.7%, mostly thanks to DAB (28%) that is listened to four times as much as radio over the internet (including apps). The trend is towards a takeover of analogue by digital radio. At this pace, this could already happen by 2016, as they have started to see in London and with in-home listening.

This increasing consumption is based on the new stations offered by BBC and commercial radio, including brand extensions and pop-up services. This offer will increase from 29 February 2016 when the second national commercial multiplex will start transmissions, including speech, music, children, Asian and religious services, three of them in DAB+. The two leading digital stations, BBC Radio 4 Extra and BBC Radio 6 Music, attract more than two million listeners weekly. On the whole, national commercial radio has twice the number of listeners in digital than in analogue, where only three services are available.

A Local DAB Expansion Plan co-funded by the BBC, commercial radios and the

- Thirty million people listen to digital radio every week
- 80% of new cars are fitted with digital radio as standard
- A second nationwide commercial multiplex will be launched in February 2016

government was deployed in 2015. This is where digital radio listening figures are lower although the growing availability of the services, including new digital-only stations, and the general growth of DAB should help to improve them dramatically. Last July, a trial for 60 small-scale stations also started, including DAB+ since January 2016.

80% of new cars were fitted with digital radio as standard in Q4 2015 (+7% as an option), including 40% of commercial vehicles. By the end of 2015, one in three people were using at least one vehicle with a digital radio most weeks. At this point, not having digital radio is a commercial disadvantage for car brands.

Finally, the digital radio tick mark, which indicates “future ready” devices, has introduced certainty in a declining radio-set market (-2.5 million in five years), for which digital tuners still make up less than 50%. This trend could be partially related to the increased use of mobile phones for radio listening beyond 25% of the population, including more than 40% for the 15-24s.

Together with the sales, the other concern for 2016 is how cuts in BBC funding will affect its investment in DAB although penetration and listening will continue to grow steadily.

GERMANY

embracer

Launch date
2011

Analogue switch-off
not scheduled

Standard



Number of stations

279

Technical coverage
(Mid-2015, % of population)

92%

Penetration of digital receivers
(Mid-2015, % of households)

11%

Germany is steadily progressing towards digital radio. In 2015 the various stakeholders converged on similar positions. Notably, a Digital Radio Board was set up by the Federal Ministry of Transport & Digital Infrastructure, including high-level representatives from the federal states, public and private broadcasters, state media authorities and the Federal Network Agency, as well as radio and car manufacturers. Together with several strong public statements by the public authorities, including ministers, this signals a strong commitment to digital radio. In addition the independent body in charge of setting the level of funding of public broadcasters, the KEF, approved funding for the roll-out of DAB+ for public radios, conditioned to a roadmap.

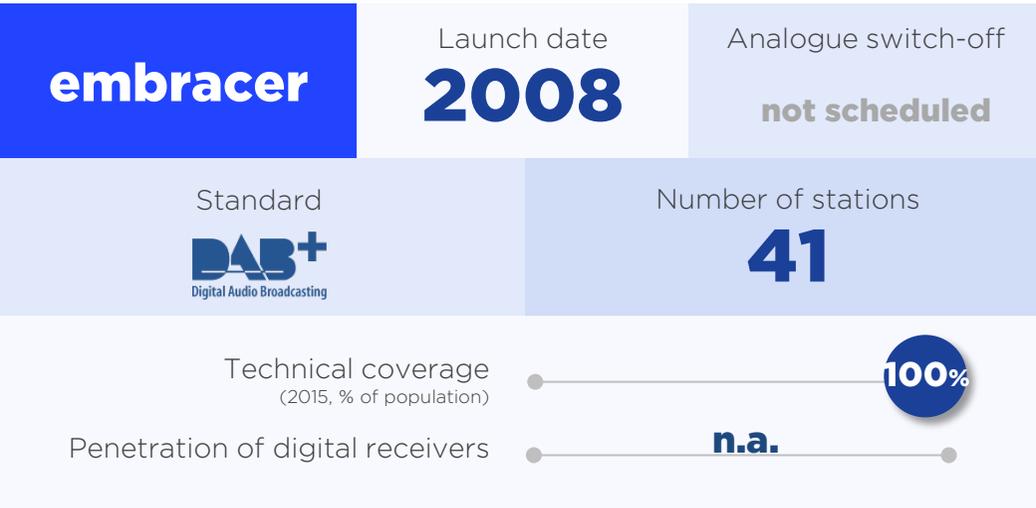
Both public and commercial broadcasters, which since April 2015 share the same radio player, pushed DAB+ with new services. Some of these services were switched from analogue, notably Klassik Radio, which in September became the first radio station to switch off its analogue frequencies. Additionally public broadcaster Deutschlandradio, which closed AM in 2015, is considering shutting down small FM transmitters in areas well served by DAB+ from 2018. Also the remaining ARD services in AM were switched off in 2015.

- Private radio Klassik Radio became the first station to switch off its analogue frequencies to concentrate on digital distribution
- A Digital Radio Board has been set up by the government including all the relevant stakeholders
- Digital tuners are widely available, totalling 30% of all the receivers sold in 2015

Four million households had at least one DAB+ radio by mid-2015, one million more than in mid-2014. But the total number of DAB+ radio sets was higher, 6.4 million. This is only 4.2% of the total number of radio sets though the figure is steadily increasing. In 2015, devices with digital tuners represented 30% of the total market for radio sets, with a 49% increase of their value year-on-year according to GfK. Interestingly, nearly two million of digital tuners are installed in cars. By mid-2015, every twentieth car sold was equipped with a digital radio.

10.6% of the population (7.4 million) use DAB+. Only for 1.8% it is the main type of reception, but in households equipped with DAB+, this figure reaches 17.3%. DAB+ is more popular among 14-39s.

As all the relevant factors are being aligned, we can only expect the process to accelerate in 2016 given the extension of the coverage, notably indoor and in motorways, and the expansion of the offer. Although the earliest tentative date for the switchover in 2020 seems overly optimistic, the option of 2025 looks much more realistic at the current expansion pace.



- The coverage of the two multiplexes reaches the whole country
- There are six national digital-only radio services and some foreign stations
- Receivers are widely available for less than EUR 35

Although in 2008 Malta was the first country to roll-out DAB+ services, the little evidence available points to a limited success.

The lack of a distinctive offer seems the main barrier for a wider adoption of digital radio: beyond the rebroadcast of some British stations, there are only six digital-only services provided by Maltese players competing against an already crowded FM dial. All these services are music stations, some of them fully-automated. On the whole, the digital-only services score very low ratings.

Three of these services belong to the two main commercial broadcasters, One Productions (Kiss) and Eden Leisure Group (Bay Easy and Bay Retro). However, public radio PBS has no specific digital service. Currently, there is no collaboration among the different stakeholders for digital radio, nor has any industry trade body being created..

One of the main discussions in Malta in the last few years has been the cost of the fees that broadcasters pay for their digital radio licences. The holder of the multiplex licence until 2022, DigiB, has repeatedly pointed out this issue as a barrier for a richer offer in a market of just 200,000 listeners where digital radio receivers are widely affordable at an entry price of less than EUR 35.

In order to avoid market stagnation, broadcasters need incentives to invest in new services. There are many opportunities for this in the area of regulation, including renewal and expiry of licences, cost of licences and direct subsidies.

NETHERLANDS

embracer

Launch date
2013

Analogue switch-off
not scheduled



Number of stations
67

Technical coverage
(2015, % of population)

95%

Penetration of digital receivers

n.a.

- Coverage to reach 97% by 2016
- Public radio NPO switches off AM and revamps its portfolio of services, strengthening DAB+
- Nearly 15% of radio devices and new cars sold have digital radio tuners

Netherlands is probably the most promising new digital radio market. All stakeholders, including the government, are aligned, coverage is quickly improving and the digital offer is substantially richer than on analogue radio. In 2015, public and commercial regional radios also launched digital services in 5 multiplexes.

This market has placed strong emphasis on public communications, launching the "Let's get digital" campaign by the trade body Digital Radio NL –and backed by the Ministry of Economic Affairs– but also other individual initiatives, such as the Digital Radio Tour by manufacturer Tivoli. As a result, awareness of digital radio is reasonably high, which is increasing interest among retailers and growth in sales. Digital radios peaked 15% of total radio sales in September 2015, while a similar figure has already been reached in new cars.

An additional strength of the Dutch market is its offer of digital-only stations. Public broadcaster NPO shut down its AM transmissions last September and moved its Radio 5 service, targeting seniors, to digital. Since January 2016 the broadcaster has redesigned its station portfolio, launching new digital-only services and shutting down two dozen web radios.

Private broadcasters are also very active, mainly relying on the extension of their analogue brands such as in the case of the two leading radios, Radio 538 and Sky Radio, with 538 NonStop and Sky Radio Hits. In both cases, the broadcasters have additional brand extensions available in Internet.

In mid-2015, 2% of the listening time was done via DAB+, still below Internet (15%), cable (24%) and analogue broadcasts (54%). The low figures for DAB+ must bear in mind that it was launched at the end of 2013.

Regarding licences, in August 2015 34 regional licences were awarded for a 2-year period, prioritizing simulcast services. In spring 2017 at the latest, new licences will be auctioned for the period 2017-2027. That's why 2027 is tentatively seen as a possible date for the switchover.

The exclusive offer available in digital radio, the effort in communications and the increasing penetration of devices will likely have an impact in the actual use of digital radio services.

BELGIUM FLEMISH

newbie

Launch date
2015

Analogue switch-off
not scheduled

Standard



Number of stations

8

Technical coverage
(2015, % of population)

25%

Penetration of digital receivers

n.a.

- DAB+ soft launched in May 2015 with a few simulcast services
- Full Flanders coverage expected by 2017
- Public stations from VRT to join DAB+ in 2016

The Flemish community of Belgium is a very recent DAB+ market, having launched a commercial multiplex in May 2015. Since March 2016 the multiplex operator Norkring België will extend the coverage of its network beyond the current area, around Brussels, with the aim of covering Flanders within a year.

Public broadcaster VRT's commitment to digital radio was stated in its recently approved strategy for 2016-2020. It will be shown again in spring 2016 when it switches its eight current digital services from DAB to DAB+, currently being tested. This will include three digital-only stations: two music brand extensions for hits (MNM Hits) and classical music (Klara Continuo) and an all-news channels (Nieuws+).

This will put more pressure on the two main commercial groups, Medialaan (Q-music and Joe FM) and Corelio (Nostalgie) to join the digital radio club. Currently this club is populated by the simulcasts of seven Flemish stations and BBC Worldwide, which is insufficient incentive to drive substantial listenership to DAB+.

The licences of commercial broadcasters expire in September 2016 and the government seems committed to attaching a mandatory investment in digital radio to licence renewal. The creation of this regulatory incentive, together with the promise to keep the status quo of current operators by not allowing new entrants, seems essential to foster commitment and investment by commercial broadcasters, which at the same time is a prerequisite for generating and marketing an attractive digital radio offer including exclusive services. This would boost sales of digital devices currently standing around 3%.

CZECH REPUBLIC

newbie

Launch date

2011

Analogue switch-off

not scheduled

Standard



Number of stations

29

Technical coverage
(2015, % of population)

58%

Penetration of digital receivers

n.a.

- Three multiplex operators and public radio drive digital radio
- Public radio Český Rozhlas has published a detailed plan for its transition to digital radio
- Although the offer is limited, digital radio already offers exclusive content

Although services available may change, there are around 29 radio stations in the various areas covered by the three multiplex operators. A dozen of these are exclusive services, half of them provided by public broadcaster Český Rozhlas, which has a Team for Digital Audio Broadcasting in-house: ČRo Radio Wave (youth station), ČRo D-dur (classical music), ČRo Jazz (jazz music), ČRo Sport (sport), ČRo Rádio Junior (children) and ČRo Rádio Retro, an archive service that in 2015 launched temporary theme channels on topics such as the end of the World War II, the history of science and the Christmas season.

Český Rozhlas provided one of the highlights of the year in March when it presented a detailed seven-step plan for the transition to digital radio. Among other measures, it suggested introducing a series of market incentives to engage current broadcasters more than they currently are, to coordinate the transition at national level with a specific group, and to find a solid model to fund the simulcasting period. Český Rozhlas also wants to operate its own multiplex, for which it launched an experimental service in Prague during 2015.

Licensing is one of the key issues to be addressed. The Czech Republic is the only country where digital radio licences in the L-Band are being used. They are valid until 2021. At the same time, the frequencies in Band III are not yet guaranteed by law. Current licences for commercial broadcasters are valid until 2025 and that year has been mentioned as a possible date for the switch-off of analogue services. To reach that target, however, regulatory movements would be needed soon.

In the positive side, there is a broad offer of receivers on this market, with an entry price for a basic DAB+ set as low as EUR 12 during the Christmas 2015 campaign. Unofficial figures point to around 50,000 receivers already sold.

Until the main issues pointed out above are solved, a complete launch of digital radio cannot be expected in the Czech Republic.

newbie

Launch date
2014

Analogue switch-off
not scheduled

Standard



Number of stations

102

Technical coverage
(2015, % of population)

19%

Penetration of digital receivers

n.a.

- The regulator CSA pushes digital radio forward with a major digital radio licensing plan from 2016 to 2023
- More than 100 stations are available, including 64 exclusive services
- Independent broadcasters lead the roll-out of digital radio, as the main commercial stations and Radio France are not involved

In 2016, France will grant digital radio licences in six major metropolitan areas (Lille, Lyon, Strasbourg, Nantes, Rouen and Toulouse), including local multiplexes. They will join Paris, Marseille and Nice. This will be the first step in a major licensing plan for digital radio announced by the regulator CSA in late 2015, and which is to be completed by 2023 reaching nearly all the French population. Although independent and community radio stations, the driving forces of digital radio in France, would like to see a quicker roll-out, this extended timeline could help to involve stakeholders that are currently out of the process, basically Radio France and the main commercial radios. In addition, the CSA also plans new FM licences.

In 2015 public broadcaster Radio France published its strategy for 2015-2019, more focused on web radio stations –seven have been launched over the last year- than on DAB+, only mentioned as a way to expand the coverage of its FIP and Mouv’ music channels. However, this could change as many stakeholders are putting pressure on Radio France to become a driving force for DAB+. It seems a natural place for it after its innovative experiences with immersive audio and binaural stereo streams NouvOson and the successful playlist service RF8.

This would be a big step forward as it is the main French radio group (22.5% market share in 2014), which already closed its AM transmissions in 2015 and plans to shut down longwave in 2016. However, its financial difficulties should be solved or additional funding for digital transmission found.

The four main commercial radio groups (RTL, NRJ, RMC and Lagardère) fear the arrival of new competitors, are against DAB+, and have not launched DAB+ services but are more focused on web radio stations. Together with Radio France, these groups attracted around 80% of the radio ad spend in 2014 and slightly less in audience share. The main commercial station in DAB+ is the ninth player in the market, Skyrock, with a 3.8% market share in 2014.

Sales of devices are still low (less than 100,000 according to GfK) although the market is still in the phase of creating awareness about digital radio. In February 2015, 45% of people surveyed had heard of the term digital terrestrial radio. Devices are widely available but will become present everywhere as digital radio tuners will become mandatory once the 20% of population coverage by digital radio services is achieved. According to the current coverage of 19%, the licensing procedures and the time required to put the multiplexes in place, this could happen by 2017.

newbie

Launch date
2012

Analogue switch-off
not scheduled



Number of stations
98

Technical coverage
(2015, % of population)

68%

Penetration of digital receivers

n.a.

Regular services in Italy started in December 2012 in the Trentino-Alto Adige region, which is the area with the biggest offer. There are also three national multiplexes, operated by public broadcaster RAI and by two commercial operators, Club DAB Italia and EuroDAB Italia. All of these have extension plans, as commercial multiplexes only cover 65% of the country, RAI 40% and some major roads are not yet covered. In October 2015, 1.5% of the population was listening to DAB+ at least once per week, lower than radio on TV (10%), smartphones (9%) and computers (5%) but higher than tablets (0.6%).

These plans are shaped by the regulator AGCOM, which was busy in 2015 preparing a licensing plan for the whole country, for which it has already launched some public tenders. This will shift the original focus from Trentino-Alto Adige to other more populated areas. Local DAB+ services will be extended from 12% to 42% of the country in the coming months.

Commercial broadcasters are leading the effort to provide new content with extensions of their analogue radios. This is the strategy of the leading station in the country, RTL 102.5, which also offers RTL 102.5 Classic, RTL 102.5 Cool and RTL 102.5 Groove in DAB+, just to name a few.

- The regulator unveils a licensing plan covering all Italy
- RAI redesigns its portfolio of digital radio stations
- A tick mark scheme ensures quality and compatibility of devices

In 2015 RAI redesigned its digital radio portfolio for both the internet and DAB+: Rai Radio 6 Teca (archive material), Rai Radio 7 Live (current and past live events) and Rai Radio 8 Opera. These three stations and Rai Radio 4 Light (jazz) are not available in analogue and are part of RAI's exclusive digital offer.

Similar to the Digital Tick Mark Scheme in the UK, the Associazione per la Radiofonia Digitale in Italia has developed a certification protocol for receivers to ensure quality and compatibility. The results are three different marks depending on the features available and according to the different profiles defined by WorldDAB. Another related institution is Digital Radio Italia, a task force that deals with public communication campaigns.

Although some car manufacturers offer DAB as standard or as an option, sales of digital tuners are still low. Awareness is limited among the general public and efforts in communication must be accompanied by a reduction in the price of devices. There is an already strong digital offer that can back these efforts: 18 simulcast and 17 exclusive services at national level plus a number of regional services depending on the area.

newbie

Launch date
2013

Analogue switch-off
not scheduled



Number of stations
22

Technical coverage
(End 2015, % of population)



Penetration of digital receivers



Supported by the regulator KRRiT, the roll-out of digital radio in Poland relies on the commitment of public broadcaster Polskie Radio: it operates the multiplex, has extended the network, has created a Digital Radio Development Centre, has secured EU funds for new digital-only services and has implemented and/or is testing features such as slideshows, Journaline, EPG, emergency warning systems and TPEG services. In 2015 Polskie Radio launched three new digital-only services, including Dzieciom for children and two pop-up stations: Radio Chopin during the 17th International Fryderyk Chopin Piano Competition and Radio Gwiazdka as a Christmas holiday season radio. Regional public broadcasters are also simulcasting their FM services in all the regions covered, including new services and features in Wrocław and Kraków.

The current offer of simulcast services and five theme digital-only stations requires the collaboration of commercial broadcasters to become more attractive to audiences. However, the three nationwide commercial radio groups are fiercely lobbying against digital radio.

- Coverage expanding as planned, with full coverage of the country expected by 2020
- New children's radio and pop-up stations launched by Polskie Radio
- Regulator KRRiT pushes for digital radio with no success among commercial broadcasters

There are also 14 sub-regional and more than 200 local stations (public, commercial and community radios) looking at digital with varying levels of interest. A low-cost solution for small-scale services, similar to the one implemented in Switzerland, is currently being tested in Wrocław. This could generate more interest from those local stations.

The lack of involvement of commercial broadcasters is the main challenge for a successful roll-out of digital radio in Poland. Incentives need to be created for nationwide commercial broadcasters, as they have a market share of 60.4% (2014). The first step could be a return to the Working Group for DAB Implementation set by the regulator and abandoned by commercial broadcasters. This group is preparing a Green Paper on the national strategy for digital radio.

In 2016, it is uncertain how the recently approved new media law could affect Polskie Radio and its digital radio plans.

AUSTRIA

wait-and-see	Launch date 2015
Standard 	Number of stations 14

In May 2015, Austria launched a DAB+ trial with 14 radio stations, including nine digital-only services. The broadcasters involved in the trial collaborate through the trade body Digitalradio Österreich, which promotes radio on new platforms. Devices are already available in the main consumer electronics shops.

Neither of the two nationwide players, public ORF and commercial Kronehit, are involved, as they would need specific incentives to participate, such as the possibility to launch new services. The network operator ORS, a subsidiary of ORF, operates the network.

The regulator KommAustria is expected to launch a call for tenders during the first half of 2017 at the latest in order to launch regular services in 2018.

BELGIUM FRENCH

wait-and-see	Launch date 1997
Standard 	Number of stations 7

Public and commercial broadcasters agreed in spring 2011 on a four-tier strategy for migration from analogue to digital radio: broadcast via DAB+, hybrid radio, online radio player - MaRadio.be, launched in 2014- and radio on TV. However, the official launch has been postponed until an agreement with the government about the funding of the roll-out is reached.

Meanwhile, public broadcaster RTBF is simulcasting its five analogue stations in DAB and three in DAB+, while also carrying two public channels from the German-speaking public broadcaster BRF. RTBF is also very active in testing new features such as slideshows, RadioDNS and TPEG. In addition, it offers a portfolio of 11 Internet-only services, including seven brand extensions of its pop and rock music station Classic 21.

HUNGARY

wait-and-see	Launch date 2009
Standard 	Number of stations 7

Hungary has been broadcasting a DAB+ trial since 2009. Three transmitters cover 30% of the population in the metropolitan area of Budapest. The services available include seven simulcast services from both public and commercial broadcasters.

Although all the regulation is in place, the terms of the multiplex licence, valid until 2020, have not been accomplished. The licence holder Antenna Hungária, owned by the Hungarian state, is working on the redesign of the network. Other stakeholders would also be willing to engage with digital radio: public broadcaster MTVA would like to expand its current offer of stations with at least seven new digital services while the regulator NMHH is keen to introduce the necessary changes to support a successful roll-out of the service.

IRELAND

wait-and-see	Launch date 2006
Standard 	Number of stations 14

The main highlight of the year happened in April when a shared Irish radio player was launched as a mobile app, including 43 services from public broadcaster RTÉ and from the commercial broadcasters associated to Independent Broadcasters of Ireland.

Regarding DAB, the situation has remained the same in the last years. There is currently one national multiplex operated by RTÉ that includes its five analogue stations and four digital-only services: one children's channel and three music stations (classic hits, electronic and rock/indie). A commercial regional multiplex is also running, including a simulcast and four digital-only stations.

Although the official standard is DAB, in both multiplexes some of the services are also transmitted in DAB+. However, further developments of digital terrestrial radio in the country will need an appropriate regulatory framework and a set of incentives for commercial broadcasters to join in.

ROMANIA

wait-and-see	Launch date 2004
Standard 	Number of stations 6

There are currently six stations from public broadcaster ROR broadcasting in DAB, including the digital-only Radio 3Net.

In January 2016, the regulator ANCOM launched a public consultation on the allocation of digital terrestrial broadcasting multiplexes, asking interested parties what spectrum bands could be subject to tender, the number and type of multiplexes and obligations that should be imposed. The Band III is still occupied by analogue television channels that did not switch-off in June 2015 as planned.

Additionally, Romania is the only European country where an HD Radio service, using the American standard IBOC, is currently available. Four services from the main commercial group, Radio Holding (16.2% market share in 2014), can be received in 10 Romanian cities with some of the few available devices already on the market from an entry price of EUR 40. However, given the steps taken by the regulator, the isolation of HD services in Europe and the struggles of this standard in its home market in the US, it is quite unlikely that it can succeed.

SLOVAKIA

wait-and-see	Launch date 2015
Standard 	Number of stations 4

In September 2015, a 4-year DRM trial ended. Three months later, DAB+ services started from one transmitter in Bratislava offering four stations from public broadcaster RTVS. These include three simulcasts and Rádio Junior, a station targeting children exclusively available online until then.

This portfolio of stations is foreseen to be extended to the 11 services offered by RTVS, including two additional Internet-only services, the classical music service Rádio Klasika and the cultural and educational channel Rádio Litera. During 2016, two new transmitters in Košice and Banská Bystrica are expected to be switched on.

This trial is an initiative of network operator Towercom. RTVS is willing to launch regular DAB+ services, however would need additional financial resources to sustain the transmission. For this reason it is looking for new sources of funding such as European funds.

SPAIN

wait-and-see	Launch date 2000
Standard 	Number of stations 18

Spain is one of the most analogue markets in Europe. In 2015, daily reach of Internet radio was just 3.7% and radio through television devices was at 1%, both flat from the previous year.

DAB is currently in a stand-by situation. There are only two transmitters in Madrid and Barcelona, covering 20% of the population and offering just one service that is not available on FM: the international channel of the public broadcaster RTVE. Since December 2014, Radio María is also broadcasting in DAB+, which was officially adopted as the standard for the Spanish market a few years ago, but with no effect until now.

The three main commercial groups, which gathered two thirds of the audience in 2014, are not willing to foster digital radio, as their incumbent position could be threatened by new entrants that have nearly no possibilities for growth in an extremely crowded FM dial. One of them, COPE, launched hybrid radio services in 2015. Also RTVE's strategy focuses on hybrid services, including high-quality streams of its music stations in the DTT network.

SWEDEN

wait-and-see	Launch date 1995
Standard 	Number of stations 17

In June 2015, the Ministry of Culture said no to the digital radio switchover on the terms proposed by the Digital Radio Industry Coordinator named by the government. This followed a negative review from the National Audit Office about the use of public funds for the switchover and the opposition of third-parties, such as the Ministry of Defence, which wanted to keep some of the digital radio frequencies.

The roadmap of the Digital Radio Industry Coordinator even included four criteria for the switchover and a tentative date in 2022-2024. This roadmap was supported by the public broadcaster Sveriges Radio (SR) and commercial broadcasters Bauer and MTG. These two broadcasters hold 21 of the 25 DAB+ licences awarded in October 2014 until 2022. Given the situation, these companies have been granted a nine-month extension of their launch date until July 2016, however it is quite unlikely that they launch amidst such uncertain conditions. For the moment, DAB services from SR covering 35% of the country and DAB+ tests from SR and the two main commercial broadcasters in the local multiplex in Stockholm are available.

TURKEY

wait-and-see	Launch date 2015
Standard 	Number of stations 5

After a trial from 2002 to 2008, public broadcaster TRT relaunched DAB with its five main radio stations in November 2015 in Ankara and in December 2015 in Istanbul. This followed several discussions and public debates held in the country during the last two years, encouraged by the regulator RTÜK.

A DAB+ trial led by TRT is expected later, probably in 2016, in six cities (Ankara, Antalya, Bursa, Istanbul, Izmir and Kocaeli), backed by the regulator. Turkey's analogue dial is already crowded with no remaining FM frequencies in the main urban areas.

FOCUS

PSM AND DIGITAL RADIO



PSM AND DIGITAL RADIO

JANUARY 2016
PUBLIC SERVICE MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS
IN EUROPE ARE OFFERING

313 DIGITAL RADIO SERVICES
IN **20** MARKETS

137 DAB services in 10 markets

195 DAB+ services in 15 markets

JANUARY 2016

PUBLIC SERVICE MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS
IN EUROPE ARE OFFERING

74 DIGITAL-ONLY SERVICES
IN **15** MARKETS

25 DAB-only services in 9 markets

54 DAB+-only services in 9 markets

PSM AND DIGITAL RADIO

FRONTRUNNERS

Public radios are the only broadcasters of the regular offer in Poland and of the trials in Romania, Slovakia and Turkey.

LEADERS

Public radios are leading the roll-out of digital radio in leading markets such as Denmark, Norway, Switzerland and the United Kingdom and pushing new and potential markets such as Belgium, Czech Republic, Poland and Slovenia.

COLLABORATION

Collaboration with commercial partners is smooth in Belgium French, Norway, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and, paradoxically, in Sweden.

SHARED PLAYER

A shared radio player with public and commercial broadcasters is run in Belgium French, Germany, Ireland and United Kingdom. Also expected in Austria.

PSM AND DIGITAL RADIO

SPECIALIZED SERVICES

Only one of the 75 General interest radio stations offered by EBU PSM in Europe is digital-only

NEWS AND CURRENT AFFAIRS

One-third of the News and current affairs stations are digital-only (10/31)

MUSIC

Music stations focus mostly on subgenres such as classical music (6) and jazz (6)

SPORT

Three out of the four Sports stations of public radios in Europe are digital-only

CHILDREN

All the 10 children's radio stations of public radios in Europe are digital-only stations. Seven are broadcasting in DAB or DAB+.

SENIORS

As target groups, seniors are becoming much more served thanks to digital-only stations, with specific services in Denmark, Netherlands, Norway and Switzerland

YOUNG ADULTS

Young adults, the group least served by public radio, are also the target of eight of these stations

WHAT'S NEXT? TRENDS AND THREATS



WHAT'S NEXT: TRENDS

LOCAL DIGITAL RADIO WILL EXPAND

The 2015 focus on regional and local services will not be shifted in 2016. New local services will be switched on in Italy, Norway, Switzerland and the UK, and France will award its first local licences for DAB+. Regional services will also expand in several other countries.

VOLUNTARY SWITCHOVER

The need to renew transmission infrastructure or to save costs, or simply the will to push digital radio forward might lead to more examples of switchover, both at station or at programme level, as successfully experienced in Germany, Netherlands, Norway and Denmark.

RADIO BECOMES SMARTER

Continuous pressure on manufacturers and the development of the digital radio market as a whole may eventually lead to digital radio tuners and hybrid radio solutions in new devices, notably smartphones and car audio systems.

WHAT'S NEXT: TRENDS

MORE DIGITAL CARS

There are already three markets (Norway, Switzerland and the UK) where the majority of new cars come with digital radio as standard. The steady growth of this feature in a major market such as Germany -and Italy- could have a dramatic effect in the commitment of car manufacturers in these and other markets.

RISE IN DIGITAL IN-CAR LISTENING

The increasing number of new cars fitted with DAB, along with easier and cheaper aftermarket solutions will push up the penetration of in-car digital radio. In addition, new TPEG and other traffic-related services will encourage in-car listeners to switch from analogue to digital. As a result, digital in-car listening might accelerate its penetration in the most advanced markets.

A MORE EUROPEAN APPROACH

Despite the difficulties in including digital radio in the EU's Digital Single Market package, more coordination among national digital radio trade bodies and the increasing European dimension of the DAB phenomenon for device manufacturers and the car industry will help to generate synergies.

WHAT'S NEXT: THREATS

DIMINISHED ROLE FOR PUBLIC RADIOS

Growing pressure on funding of public broadcasters (UK) and their instability (Poland) might have a negative effect on their involvement and leadership in the roll-out of digital radio.

INSUFFICIENT COLLABORATION

This risks slowing down the roll-out in several markets (Austria, Poland). This is especially true for commercial broadcasters, for which attractive incentives need to be found.

LACK OF POLITICAL INITIATIVE

Even when collaboration among stakeholders is in place, the lack of political initiative to deploy digital radio may also delay or halt the process, as seen in Sweden and the French-speaking part of Belgium.

FURTHER MEDIA INTELLIGENCE PUBLICATIONS

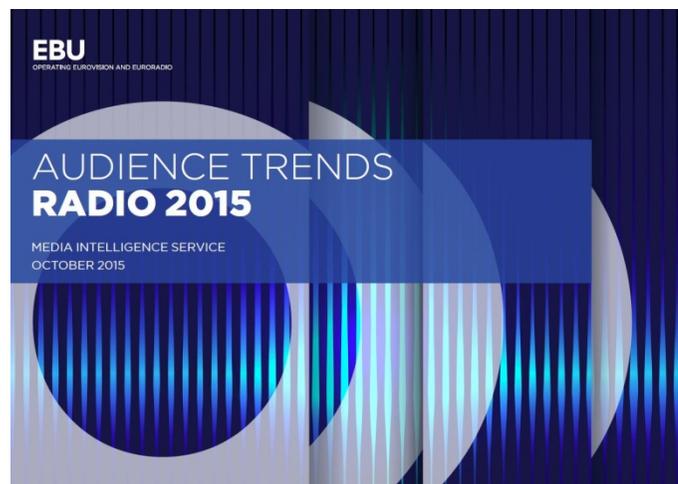


DIGITAL RADIO TOOLKIT

A guide on how to succeed in the switchover process to digital terrestrial radio:

www3.ebu.ch/drt.html

(Open access)



MEDIA INTELLIGENCE PORTAL

Find further radio research:

www.ebu.ch/mis (Members-only)

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