



WorldDAB 371
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**A response from the European Affairs Committee of WorldDAB
to the invitation to contribute to the work programme of the
European Regulator's Group for electronic communications
networks and services**

WorldDAB, the world Forum for Digital Audio Broadcasting, welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the work programme of this Group, and, in doing so, to restate the importance of Radio to the citizens of Europe and the role of Digital Radio in the information society.

The World DAB Forum is an international non-governmental organisation whose objective is to promote, harmonise and co-ordinate the implementation of Digital Radio services based on the Eureka 147 DAB system. Its goal is to convert this brilliant piece of engineering achievement into a worldwide commercial marketing success, to the lasting economic and social benefit of all concerned.

The Forum represents more than one hundred companies and organisations from all sections of the Radio industry, including public and private broadcasters, DAB receiver and other electronic equipment manufacturers, network and telecoms operators, service providers, regulators and others in all Member States and beyond.

Within WorldDAB, the European Affairs Committee has a particular role to engage the interest and support of the European Institutions for a medium which continues to play a vital role in the lives of the 210 million Europeans who tune in each day for an average of 3 hours.

The harmonization of regulatory frameworks for digital radio in Member States (in particular licensing regimes) would significantly benefit the coordinated, quality implementation of Digital Radio across Europe. In this respect, WorldDAB points to the work completed by the Commission in the framework of DBEG (ONP Committee's Digital Broadcasting Expert Group). This work includes a comparative overview of the national regulatory treatment of Digital Radio in the EU as well as some suggestions to Member States on how to improve the chances of Digital Radio's success. A section on possible future work makes the following recommendations, among others:

- that the status of, and progress achieved by, Digital Radio in the EU should be reviewed at a future date, and perhaps at regular intervals;
- that Member States, on the basis of the analysis done in DBEG, should suggest proposals for co-ordinated European approaches in the relevant areas where major divergences have been identified. These areas fall to national competence so, in line with the principle of subsidiarity, it is the Member States' responsibility to undertake actions to achieve an EU critical mass of simultaneous and similar regulations on DR. This will hopefully stimulate the industry and contribute, in particular, to reductions in the price (and increases in the numbers) of receivers. Finally;
- that, a European recommendation on DR, or a similar non-legally binding measure, could possibly be envisaged so as to provide a political boost to this technology.

(see: ONP Committee Working Document on "Regulatory Treatment of Digital Radio in the Member States" - ONP-DBEG 02-12Rev1, 8/07/2002

http://forum.europa.eu.int/Public/irc/infso/onp/library?l=/onp_doc_2002&vm=detailed&sb=Title)

WorldDAB suggests that the inclusion of digital radio regulatory harmonization in the work programme of the European Regulators' Group would represent a natural continuity to the work on digital radio carried out by DBEG.

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