



# Press release

## Initiative Marketing Digital Radio

### **New coding standard specifies the goal for the future of digital radio**

***The WorldDMB forum submits another audio coding system for standardization. Many issues still need solving, IMDR stresses the importance of customer-friendly introduction.***

**Bonn, November 8, 2006** – The Initiative Marketing Digital Radio (IMDR) welcomes the initiative taken by the WorldDMB forum, which will submit a draft specification for a new audio coding system to the European Institute for Telecommunications (ESTI) within the next few days. This completes the next step required to standardize the coding process known among experts as AAC+ or DAB+, and thus to prepare it for the market in the coming years.

Though on the surface simply a piece of technical information with future relevance, this news is of crucial importance to development and production departments with equipment manufacturers, since it describes their goal for the coming years. With standardization in place, suitable equipment can now be developed, allowing the future portfolio for the media species known as digital audio to be tailored to enhanced customer expectations.

However, so as not to overburden and, possibly, disconcert the market and, above all, retail and end-users with all the technical details, IMDR explicitly points out in this context that the new standard will not mean the end of the present system. On the contrary, the new codec has deliberately been developed with downwards compatibility, and explicitly allows the two technologies to be used side by side.

For Germany and the international arena, the launch of the standardization procedure means that technology development for DAB digital radio can proceed this year following the re-coordination of frequency resources at the international Regional Radiocommunication Conference (RRC06). But, and this is stressed emphatically by Helmut Egenbauer, the IMDR chairman: "The step toward standardizing the new codec as announced by WorldDMB is definitively not the end of DAB as we know it but a logical step in a further development that is geared well into the future. IMDR has always pointed out that DMB is simply another application on the DAB platform. The same applies to the new codec. There will be no change in the programs and services that have been provided to date, new ones will simply be added!"

#### **What does this step actually mean for DAB in Germany and worldwide?**

1. In the future we will have another system in addition to the former MPEG1 Layer II system – so far it has been referred to as AAC+ or DAB+.
2. This new codec, also reflected in MPEG 4, will make it possible to broadcast more audio programs within a multiplex in the future, leading to more economic use of



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frequencies, which in turn will cut broadcast costs per program. Here again, however, it will not be possible to offer three or four times the size of the current program ensemble.

3. All new equipment will be downwards-compatible and therefore also always able to receive the programs broadcast to date.

4. It will be possible for the two coding systems to exist, and be used, side by side. In some countries, the system used so far - MPEG 1 Layer II - will remain the one most commonly used.

5. A transitional scenario for Germany will have to be geared to customer expectations and equipment units in the market. Only when the standardization and implementation phases have reached completion will it be possible to develop a customer and market compatible scenario. This is an area in which IMDR will play an active role.

6. The former term - DAB - is therefore having a 'plus' sign added, and future appliances will offer yet another function in addition to the now familiar ReVu function or SD card recording option. The choice for customers will broaden and become more attractive.

IMDR chairman Helmut Egenbauer sums up the situation as follows: "As a universal audio standard, DAB is part of a digital world that is continually advancing. This concept is familiar to us with equipment like the PC, MP3 player or mobile phone, and even digital TV. Why should it be any different with digital radio? The new codec will enhance and advance the existing DAB digital radio!"

### **About IMDR:**

The Initiative Marketing Digital Radio is a group set up by industry, network operators and broadcasters to support the expansion of digital radio. More information is available online at [www.digitalradio.de](http://www.digitalradio.de), which offers a broad range of services and information on current programs, equipment and retail addresses.

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