

PRESS RELEASE

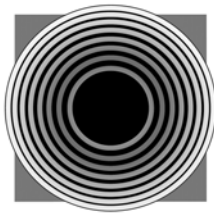
New Digital Radio Channels in Hesse

Hit Radio FFH and F.A.Z. Business Radio go on air

Frankfurt am Main, August 2, 2002 – It has all clicked into place: after lengthy negotiations, two more Digital Radio channels are going on air in Hesse. The market leader of Hesse’s radio scene, Hit Radio FFH, has been up and running since August 1. The financial radio station of the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ) will follow in the next few days. Both channels will be broadcast throughout Hesse. This paves the way for the gradual transition from analog FM to the digital radio age in Hesse. The State Authority for Private Broadcasting in Hesse (LPR Hessen) awarded the broadcasting licenses for digital radio back in June 2001. Hit Radio FFH and F.A.Z. Business Radio were among those awarded a license. Yet prolonged negotiations delayed the final launch – the parties have now finally reached agreement.

Dirk Risse, managing director of Hessen Digital Radio GmbH and operator of Hesse’s radio network, was pleased after the contract was successfully completed. “The digital radio scene in Hesse has become much more attractive since the channels have been launched.” Together with the two public stations – Deutschlandfunk and DeutschlandRadio Berlin – which have been offering digital broadcasts since the end of 2001, people can now receive four channels throughout Hesse. The range of services will become even more diverse at the beginning of 2003: Another station will be going on air – harmony.fm, the new music radio station from FFH.

Risse is convinced that forward-looking commitment from the private program organizers will drive forward the digitization of radio and ensure its long-term future. “Digital Radio is well on its way to conquering the mass market – this is borne out not least by the current sales figures of digital receivers.” In his opinion, the decision taken by Hit Radio FFH and F.A.Z. Business Radio will further



strengthen the positive trend: “We assume that the other license holders will follow this good example”, says Risse. At any rate, the negotiations are well underway.

Hessischer Rundfunk needs to rethink things

Hessischer Rundfunk (HR) now also needs to face up to the new situation, Risse adds. Although ARD has clearly declared its support for Digital Radio, HR continues to exercise restraint. Background to this is the strategy paper on the transition to digital radio broadcasting, which was approved in March this year by the ARD directors. From this it follows among other things that the ARD institutions want to develop “attractive additional services” for Digital Radio in future in order to provide an “incentive for the switch to digital technology”. It also emerges that ARD is striving for the “provision of additional transmission capacities for Digital Radio” in order to be able to reproduce the “entire range of programs of the respective ARD station”. “We would welcome it if Hessischer Rundfunk would follow the recommendations of the ARD strategy paper”, explains Risse. The latest developments should give cause for a rethink. “The involvement of Hessischer Rundfunk would speed up the necessary transition from analog to digital radio, extend the range of programs and significantly increase the attractiveness of the new medium”, according to Risse.

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