

CMFE

COMMUNITY MEDIA FORUM
EUROPE



AMARC Europe - World
Association of Community
Radio Broadcasters

Ministry of Communications
Secretaries de Serviços de Comunicação Eletrônica
Mr Genildo Lins
c/o Patricia Avilla
Esplanada dos Ministérios, Bloco R, Sala 900
CEP 70044-900 Brasilia - Brazil

Subject: **European Community Radio Sector Opt for DRM+**
Nijmegen. The Netherlands, 22 February 2013

Dear Mr Lins and Ms Avilla,

With this letter we (CMFE and Amarc-Europe: see *Addendum* for more information) inform you about digital radio developments in Europe with focus on impact for the almost 3.000 community radio's here.

The International Telecommunications Union has approved four technical standards for audio broadcasting on the global scene: DAB/DAB+, DRM/DRM+, HD Radio (IBOC) and ISDB-T. However, no technical standard has been recommended or approved by the European Union. The European Commission has stated the EU does not currently have a common policy on radio broadcasting. Member states are responsible for radio policy under the EU-subsiarity principle. ¹⁾

In a letter to the European Commission CMFE and AMARC-Europe (the European section of AMARC, the world association for community radio) positioned the DRM+ solution in its broader context of digitization of terrestrial radio in general. ²⁾

In the letter the European Commission was asked to enter into a dialogue to:

- Include necessary actions in the Digital Agenda to accommodate community (local) media to enter the digital broadcasting era;
 - Enforce the use of open standard, hybrid digital radio receivers;
 - Support and promote the adoption of DRM+
- and
- Monitor the revision of national FM frequency policies among member states.

1) http://www.cmfe.eu/docs/2012_02_06_The_European_Commission_response_digitalization.pdf

2) http://www.cmfe.eu/docs/2011_12_19_CMFE_AMARCEUROPE_DIGITALREVOLUTION.pdf



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In the conference Communication Rights in the Digital Environment ³⁾ held in 2012 at the European Parliament in Brussels, proposals of the Community Radio Sector were delivered to Members of the European Parliament. Among a number of issues, the European Union and its Member States were called upon to ensure that digital broadcasting technologies and laws allow community radios the right to both own and operate their own transmission systems. This position by the community media sector is crucial for the choice for DRM+ in stead of or next to the DAB/DAB+ system, which is build on multiplexes.

For community radio, mostly operating its own transmitter systems, also an open system is of importance. One company does not own the rights to the modulation system. The DRM (as well as the DAB) systems are open in contrary to HD Radio, which is a proprietary system. There are royalties paid for DRM but only by the transmitter manufactures. An open system offers the possibility to everybody to develop new applications including open source transmitter software with DAB and DRM. It will be possible for community radio to build own, low-cost transmitters.

The European Broadcasting Union recommends that when DAB coverage is not possible, to use DRM as defined in ETSI ES 201 980 for digital radio broadcasting in the frequency bands currently used for analogue radio broadcasting (AM and FM). ⁴⁾ Also Australia has made this choice. ⁵⁾

CMFE sees it valuable that DRM+ main characteristic is that it is the only open worldwide standard for viable digitization of local FM radio in a Eureka 147 compatible way. DRM+ is a universal standard accepted by the European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI) and the International Telecommunications Union.

3) An AMARC-Europe initiative, held in Brussels on May 8-9 2012. The following were present: CMFE (Europe), CMA (UK), CMS (UK), SNRL (France), CNRA(France), ReMC (Spain), Radio Tas Tas (Basque Country), CRAOL (Ireland), CraXX (Belgium), Radio Centraal (Belgium), SRMS (Hungary), VFRÖ (Austria), Radiofonia (Poland), NRO (Sweden) and BFR (Germany)

4) SFN means that a radio station can use the same frequency for multiple transmitters simultaneously even within its coverage area. This makes it easier for the listener to find his radio station if it has transmitters in more than one place.

5) "Review of technologies for digital radio in regional Australia", Final report 7 October 2011, http://www.dbcde.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/140187/Final_Report_-_PDF_version_for_website_111011.pdf



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HD Radio (IBOC) operates with a total bandwidth of 400 kHz, which is not compatible with the existing channel raster of Band II (the FM-band) in Europe and many other parts of the world. DRM+ operates within a bandwidth of 100 kHz, which makes it natural choice for a smooth transition from analogue to digital on the FM band. It would allow 1-4 radio programmes within the same spectrum currently occupied by one FM programme. Additionally it is possible with DRM+ to transmit in the VHF Bands I and III. We also see possibilities to use Single Frequency Network ⁶⁾ for DRM+ transmitters as a benefit for small-scale broadcasting.

Today DRM+ is the widely accepted choice for digitalization on Band II (the FM band) in Europe especially for small-scale broadcasting. Together DAB+ and DRM+ will probably also become the digital systems applied on multistandard platforms.

Community Media Forum Europe strongly recommends the choice of DRM+ for community radio in Brazil as well in other parts of the world.

We are very interested in the policy developments in Brazil on this issue.

For Community Media Forum Europe

For Amarc-Europe:

Pieter de Wit
President CMFE

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Pieter de Wit'.

Mariano Sanchez
President Amarc Europe,
A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Mariano Sanchez'.



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Addendum by letter dated 22 February 2013 to Ministry of Communications of Brazil.

Community Media Forum Europe (CMFE)

The Community Media Forum Europe (CMFE), which was founded 2004 in Halle, Germany, is an European network of policy experts, organizations and federations, which aim to support and present the role of Community Media on the European level. CMFE has a total of 107 members from 25 European countries: 50 Individual Members and 57 Organizational Members, of which 26 are (National) Federations.

The number of community stations in Europe is, based on the CMFE Mapping & Rating project 2012, 2237 community radio and 521 community television stations.

In 2008 CMFE has been admitted as observer of the Council of Europe (CoE), on the Steering Committee on the Media and new Communications Services (CDMC) and the newly formed Group of Specialists on New Media (NC-NM). CMFE there has the important role to represent the interest of the Community Media sector at the pan-European level. CMFE has been granted participatory status with the Council of Europe and is part of the International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGO) conference.

CMFE is registered in the European Union Transparency Register (http://europa.eu/transparency-register/index_en.htm) as INGO (International Non Governmental Organisation) under Identification number: 40306691699-12

AMARC Europe

AMARC, the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters, is the international nongovernmental organisation for the promotion, support and development of community radio worldwide. The international headquarters is located in Montreal, Canada.

AMARC-Europe is the European regional section of AMARC grouping together radios and their national federations from 40 European countries, a network of 1500 community broadcasting services. The headquarters of AMARC-Europe were established in Sheffield, UK following the first AMARC Pan-European Conference of Community Radio Broadcasters held in Ljubljana, Slovenia, in 1994, which also adopted the Community Radio Charter for Europe. From 2009 the main office of Amarc Europe is based in Brussels, where the organization is registered under the Belgian Law as an International NGO.

The principal activities of AMARC-Europe are policy, research and advocacy; training and exchange of personnel; programme exchange and coproduction's; solidarity and co-operation between East, Central and Western Europe and with community radio broadcasters in other regions of the world.

CMFE - Nijmegen / AMARC Europe - Brussels 22 February 2013



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