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*Dear readers,*

## THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA ADOPTED THE STRATEGY ON THE DIGITAL SWITCH-OVER WITHIN THE FREQUENCY BANDS OF 174-230 MHz AND 470-862 MHz

In the 91st session held on June 17th, 2009, the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted the Strategy on the digital switch-over within the frequency bands of 174-230MHz and 470-862MHz in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Strategy determines optimal solution for fast and efficient switch-over to digital terrestrial broadcasting.

The Strategy is based on the principles of promotion of development of information society in Bosnia and Herzegovina, encouragement of further development of competition, stimulation for creating conditions for continuous development of media freedom and interest protection for all users and operators in the communication sector of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This comprises non-discrimination approach, quality and price of services.

By accepting this Strategy, a new chapter in the digital switch-over process in Bosnia and Herzegovina will be opened. We have a period ahead when the work on designing the Action plan for task realization concerning implementation and successful switch-over Strategy in Bosnia and Herzegovina will be done.



## ACTION PLAN

After the Strategy, the adoption of the Action plan follows together with the preparation activities for the beginning of the transition phase. Relevant institutions will accept a clearly defined action plan before the beginning of the transition period, in order to conduct necessary procedures in time. The Action plan should predict each phase of the Strategy implementation, above all the

acceptance of all necessary legal and regulatory framework, establishing the time frame, as well as the subvention plan and digital dividend utilization. Concerning Bosnia and Herzegovina's commitment towards the European integrations, as well as DTT introduction dynamics in neighboring administrations, EU Commission recommendation (COM (2005)204) states that

all member states should completely switch-over to digital terrestrial broadcasting. Due to this, the Strategy brings the following conclusions:

1. In Bosnia and Herzegovina analogue broadcasting will be fully switched-off in the UHF band IV (470-582MHz - channels 21-34) and V (582-862 MHz- channels 35-69); on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011 at 00.01hrs.
2. When introducing digital terrestrial television in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the DVB-T standard with MPEG-4 (H.264/AVC) compression system will be used;
3. The transition period for the switch-over to digital terrestrial broadcasting should be as short as possible;
4. The introduction process for the digital terrestrial broadcasting should be conducted in phases which are interdependent and interrelated;
5. A public campaign should be conducted with the aim to inform and educate the BH public about the introduction process of digital terrestrial broadcasting, to present advantages of digital television and the steps expected from citizens in preparing their households to receive the digital TV signal in accordance with the given deadlines;
6. Provide subsidies for the purchase of the DVB-T receivers. These subsidies will significantly speed up the process of transition to DTT, because it is an efficient way to stimulate citizens to buy these devices as soon as possible. In this way the penetration of receivers in the market will be observed, which will enable TV stations to make sooner decisions to introduce digitalization to their programmes and access the multiplex.

## DTT FORUM OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Also, the Council of Ministers, in its 91<sup>st</sup> Session, adopted the decision proposal on the DTT Forum's continuation of work on the digital terrestrial television, whose proposer was Ministry for Communication and Transport in BiH.

DTT Forum of Bosnia and Herzegovina is an expert body in charge of the Strategy implementation and overseeing the switch-over process in accordance with the best European practice in this area. Similar examples of close cooperation between portfolio Ministry and regulators with experts and industry/operators can be found in digital broadcasting pioneer countries (such as Great Britain- Digital UK and Italy- DGTVi), where this model was very successful.

DTT Forum of Bosnia and Herzegovina has so far received significant compliments from the country, region and Europe concerning organization, work and results. Also, the continuity of work of the DTT Forum is of great importance for successful implementation of the digital switch-over. Further on, in the Report on the progress of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period from October 2007 - October 2008, the European Committee concluded that, by establishing

the Forum on digital television (DTT), the progress was made in audio-visual policy and media.

In the upcoming period, the DTT Forum will work as an expert and advisory body for the Council of Ministers of BH and the Communications Regulatory Agency, and will follow the digital switch-over process through the coordination with institutions in charge of the Strategy implementation and interested parties. Public information and education, as well as protection of end users, with adherence to the best practices at the World and European levels, will continue to be the focus of the work of the DTT Forum in the future.

The idea of establishing the DTT Forum was based on conclusions and recommendations from the Conference on 'Introduction of Digital Television in BH', held on March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2006 in Sarajevo, and its tasks defined in the Broadcasting Sector Policy ('Official Gazette of BH', No.18/07 of March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2007). According to the conclusions from the 50<sup>th</sup> Session of the Council of Ministers of BH from May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2008, the DTT Forum of Bosnia and Herzegovina developed the draft of the Strategy for the switch-over from analogue to digital terrestrial broadcasting in the

frequency bands of 174-230MHz and 470-862MHz in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The structure of DTT Forum consists of: the Council of DTT Forum (representatives of the Ministry for Communication and Transport of BiH and the Communications Regulatory Agency, work group coordinators), Secretariat (secretary and Secretary assistant), with five working groups specialized for regulatory, programming, technological and promotion issues and socio-economic aspects of the transition to DTT.



Expert committee.

The DTT Forum Secretariat initiated its work in June 2007. By the decision of the Council of DTT Forum, the working group coordinators were appointed in September 2007. First working meetings with international experts for DTT were held on 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> of September 2007. The Secretariat of DTT Forum coordinated work groups, organized meetings and ensured necessary material, keeping the minutes, and compiling and consolidating work material for the draft of the Strategy.



involve interested parties within the communication sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the transition process to digital terrestrial broadcasting.

“Introduction of DTT in BH”, held in Sarajevo on September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2007, was organized by DTT Forum / CRA and Twinning Light project (AGCOM). Furthermore, in order to

present the DTT introduction process in BH to the wider audience, the press conference was organized by the Ministry for Communications



and Transport and the CRA, and held on September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2007. It is important to emphasize the dedication of the workshop to technical aspects of transition to DTT in BH (April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2008), and the very successful international conference organized by DTT Forum and Communications Regulatory Agency (May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2008 and November 26<sup>th</sup>, 2008).

In general, DTT Forum has had more than 100 working group meetings, out of which five were plenary, four workshops and two conferences, published 17 newsletters, and together with the Communications Regulatory Agency conducted a research within the communication sector and initiated a page dedicated to the process of DTT introduction in Bosnia and Herzegovina: [www.dtt.ba](http://www.dtt.ba)

DTT Forum gathered interested parties in the communication sector and worked intensively on the promotion of DTT transition and on education of general population and expert audience. In designing optimal solutions for Bosnia and Herzegovina and DTT Strategy draft, the Forum consulted a number of acknowledged international experts in this field, and actively cooperated with similar subjects in region and Europe.

The switch-over to digital terrestrial broadcasting is a necessity and obligation for BH. Experiences from other European countries show that BH timely started with the Strategy development and planning of digital switch-over. Rational usage of resources, involvement of all interested parties, well-designed plan, successful work of DTT Forum BH and cooperation with Communications Regulatory Agency and Ministry for Communication and Transport, ensures success in the DTT introduction in Bosnia and Herzegovina.