



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
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Federal Office of Communications OFCOM  
Media Division  
  
René Wehrlin



**digris**

Network for small scale  
DAB+ islands  
Thomas Gilgen

# Small scale DAB+ in Switzerland

A complementary solution for community broadcasters

WorldDAB General Assembly 2017 – Paris – 8 November 2017

I am very happy to present, together with Thomas Gilgen, in greater detail the small-scale DAB-networks in Switzerland.



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DAB+



**8,300,000 inhabitants**  
**3,250,000 DAB+ devices sold**  
**Coverage 90 – 99%**  
**120 stations on air**

Switzerland has some **8.3 million inhabitants**, and 3.25 million DAB-devices have been sold to date. **Coverage** ranges from 90 to 99 per cent, and **120 radio stations** can be received digitally.



Digital radio broadcasting in Switzerland has therefore achieved a sustained **breakthrough**. Turning back is no longer an option.



As a result, all FM stations made a firm **commitment** to the migration three years ago.



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FM

2024



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... and the **date** for the FM switch-off was decided: 2024 **at the latest**.



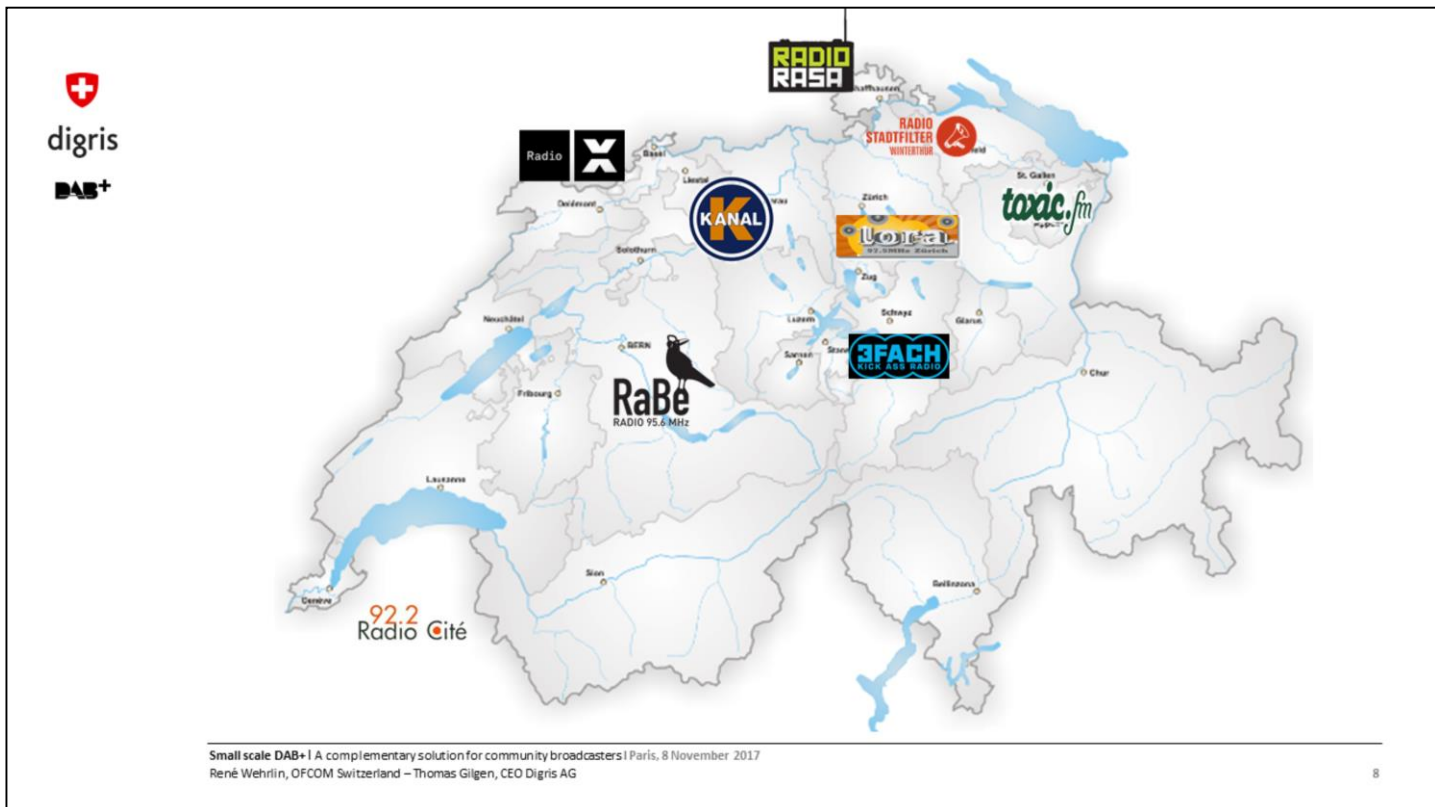
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DAB exists in Switzerland since 1999, and the **public service provider SRG** was to take **on the driving role**. It produces today a total of 17 stations and accounts for 65 per cent of listeners.



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However, over the last 35 years, the **private** FM radio stations with a regional focus have also become an **integral part of the radio landscape**. There are now **33 licensed commercial** stations.



In addition, on the local level, there are **nine complementary** radio stations. They broadcast in **urban areas**, and generally offer **alternative programming**.



# Ordinance on Radio and Television

-  **Art. 36** Complementary non-profit-oriented radio programme services

**must differentiate thematically, culturally and musically**

**must take account of the linguistic and cultural minorities**

<sup>1</sup> A complementary non-profit-oriented radio programme service must differentiate itself thematically, culturally and musically from other licensed radio programme services that can be received in the same coverage area. In particular, a non-profit-oriented programme service must take account of the linguistic and cultural minorities in the coverage area.

**the broadcasting of advertising is not permitted**

<sup>2</sup> In a non-profit-oriented radio programme service, the broadcasting of advertising is not permitted, with the exception of self-advertising, which predominantly serves to build audience loyalty, including references to media

What does this mean?

According to the law, they are obliged to **differentiate** themselves **thematically, culturally and musically** and to take into account **linguistic and cultural minorities**. **Advertising is not permitted**, only sponsoring. To this end a maximum of **70 per cent** of their operating costs are funded from the **broadcasting licence fee**.



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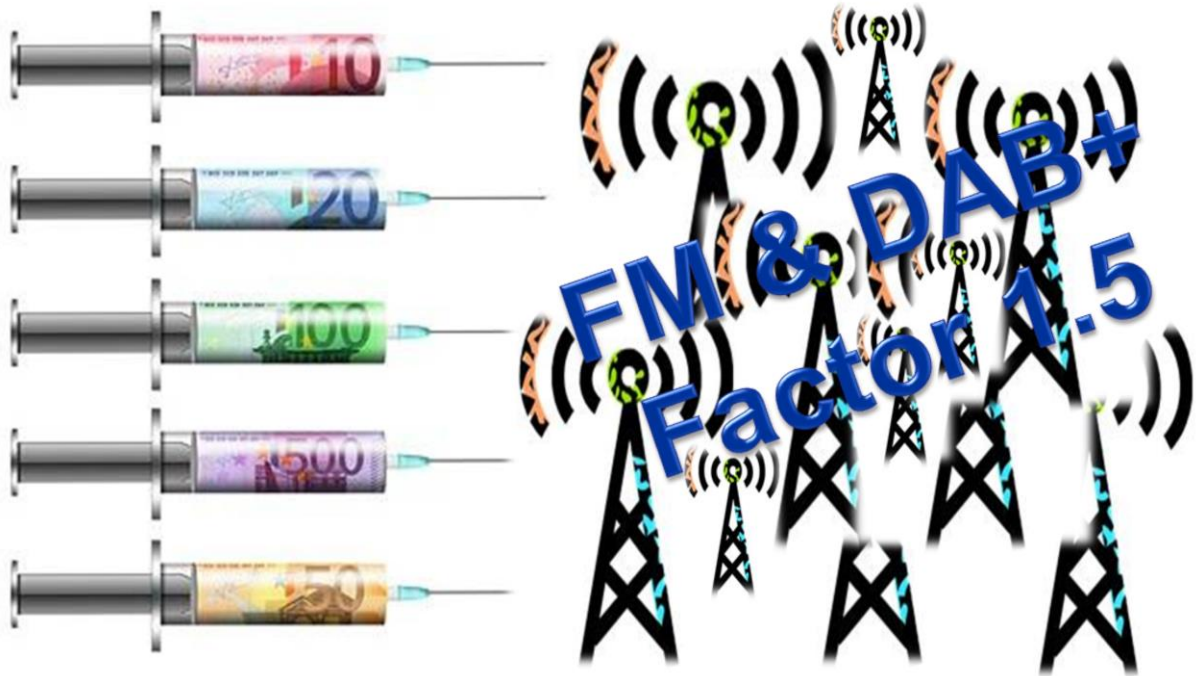
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So these non-commercials fulfill an **important** socio-political task in the Swiss media landscape. This is why we were very pleased, when **Digris** made efforts to acquire a licence for **small-scale DAB-islands** in urban areas. And as you can see from the blue spots, almost **all** the large cities in Switzerland now have coverage.

# FM



But Thomas' company does not only permit **the non-commercials** to have access to the digital radio. Digris is also making a **major contribution** which will enable **FM to be switched off** in a few years with a **clear conscience**.



However: DAB-broadcasting increases the costs for FM stations by some 50 percent . DAB-simulcast can therefore be financed **only** if it is **subsidized**.



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And indeed, **80 per cent** of the costs paid by broadcasters to DAB-platform-operators **are covered**. Incidentally, it is not only FM broadcasters, who are entitled to a contribution, but all radio stations, including cable or web radio stations.





By building cost-effective island platforms, Digriis has also made a **significant** contribution to the **media diversity** required by our **constitution**. Because even radio stations with **small budgets** can enter the market. I **maintain**, that this strategy has to date been **successful** for all those involved, as shown by the large number of new DAB only stations.



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I think, we are on the way. Because we are convinced, that a switch-over can only **succeed** if **everyone** is on board. --

That's it from the regulator's perspective: I am sure you would now like to hear the conclusions of the network operator. Thomas, over to you: