

V THE DIGITALIZATION PROCESS

At a session held on April 4, the RBA Council discussed the technical possibilities for setting up several packages with various content in the Initial Network for the testing of the digital TV signal and established the list of broadcasters whose programs of which met the requirements for making certain packages. In the press release that ensued, the Council said it had taken into account the broadcasters' individual requests, as well as their statements as to programming, technical and financial resources. We remind that the Council said earlier that the Initial Network might comprise the content provided by the public service broadcaster – RTS 1 and RTS 2, as well as RTS Digital and RTS HD, all national commercial broadcasters – TV Pink, TV Avala, TV Prva, TV B92 and Happy TV/HappyK, as well as RTV for the Vojvodina region and TV Studio B for the region of Belgrade. Since ETV (public company “Broadcasting Equipment and Communications”) announced that the Initial Network would be able to realize several different programming packages in different parts of the country, it means that packages in various regions shall be supplemented by channels possessing terrestrial licenses for these regions. This is important because no separate license is issued for broadcasting in the Initial Network; broadcasting is performed on the basis of the existing terrestrial licenses issued at an open competition (except in the case of the republic and provincial public service broadcasters, whose programs are broadcast nationally/in the province directly on the basis of the Law), with a defined service zone of the Initial Network, in order for the broadcaster to be included in the latter. Accordingly, in the Initial Network covering about 40% of the Serbian population, ETV will air the programs of the public service broadcaster and the programs of national commercial broadcasters at the national level. The programming package in Vojvodina will also include two channels of the Vojvodina public service broadcaster; the Belgrade programming package will also include Studio B, while the programming package in Central Serbia will also include TV Kragujevac. Another two programming packages in southern and southwest Serbia will include TV Vranje from Vranje and TV Belle Amie from Nis, namely Regionalna TV from Novi Pazar. We remind that on March 15, RATEL issued to ETV the licenses for the use of frequencies for the Initial Network, while ETV started the trial broadcast in the DVB T2 on March 21. ETV said the Initial Network to be intended, in its experimental phase, for testing the system, transmitters, receivers, various parameters and capacities. ETV has yet to start releasing the measurement results and reports on the functioning of the network. Although the Ministry of Culture, Media and Information Society has released the Specification of Minimum Technical Requirements for the Reception of the Digital Terrestrial Television Signal in the Republic of Serbia, as well as the Guidelines on the Manner and Procedure for Testing the Devices (STBs and digital television sets) with the aim of assessing compliance with the requirements for the reception of digital terrestrial television signal in the Republic of Serbia, there are still no television sets on the



market that have been ascertained to meet the requirements from the aforementioned Specification. Therefore it is difficult to assess how many citizens currently receive television program through the Initial Network. However, the Ministry has announced that the primary objective of the Initial Network is not to achieve high ratings, but to ensure – by testing the system and its parameters – a smoother process of switching over to digital broadcasting.