PRESS RELEASE
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DVB URGES VIA LICENSING TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF CONCERNS EXPRESSED BY MHP ADOPTERS; LOOKS FOR DISCLOSURE OF PATENTS COVERED BY TERMS

Geneva – 13 March 2006 – The DVB Project Office reports that the terms proposed for licensing patents essential to the Multimedia Home Platform have been broadly criticised by DVB members and by other implementers. The stiff reaction was in response to further terms announced on 2 March 2006 during DVB World in Dublin. Some critics suggest that the royalties proposed will lead implementers to slow the take-up of the MHP standard.

The Multimedia Home Platform (MHP) is a specification, adopted by the DVB Project, accommodating both digital broadcasting and interactivity. MHP set-top boxes have been introduced throughout Europe, with strong take-up in Italy. Until the announcement of terms earlier this month, MHP was scheduled for introduction in France and Spain. The standard is also used as the core for consumer devices in US cable networks and by the Blu-ray Disk Association. Holders of patents essential to MHP are forming a licensing programme (“patent pool”) and have named Via Licensing to administer the programme. The terms announced in Dublin by Via Licensing on behalf of the patent holders can be found at: www.vialicensing.com/news/via_pr_0603_MHP.html.

“In Dublin and during the past week, I’ve collected a number of highly adverse comments to the licensing programme,” reported Peter MacAvock, Executive Director DVB. “I’ve heard that the royalties are too onerous and don’t reflect the different broadcast distribution patterns within Europe. Accounting for MHP households as the basis for assessing royalties is unclear, especially in Europe free-to-air markets. Also, it’s claimed that the royalties on equipment are too high compared to the cost of production, at a time when an MHP box ex factory is approaching €30. Overall this news must be terribly disheartening to those markets which are considering the commercialisation of MHP.”

DVB itself doesn’t express views on commercial terms offered by patent holders, but collects and forwards on comments of its members and other implementers. It also provides a forum for discussion of individual views during meetings of its IPR Module.

Carter Eltzroth, Legal Director DVB, stated, “DVB has worked hard to promote a favourable licensing and compliance environment for MHP. It would be extremely disappointing if the market concludes that the terms required by the MHP pool block further commercialisation. Also the pool has not yet told us what patents are covered.
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by the licence. I hope that the pool delivers a patent list at the 6 April meeting of our IPR Module.”

Background

The DVB Project
The Digital Video Broadcasting Project (DVB) is an industry-led consortium of over 250 broadcasters, manufacturers, network operators, software developers, regulatory bodies and others in over 35 countries committed to designing global standards for the delivery of digital television and data services. The DVB standards cover all aspects of digital television from transmission through interfacing, conditional access and interactivity for digital video, audio and data. The consortium came together in 1993 to create unity in the march towards global standardisation, interoperability and future proofing.

To date, there are numerous broadcast services using DVB standards. There are hundreds of manufacturers offering DVB compliant equipment, which is already in use around the world. DVB dominates the digital broadcasting world. A host of other services is also on-air with DVB-T, DVB-S and DVB-C including data on the move and high-bandwidth Internet over the air. Further information about DVB can be found at: www.dvb.org.

DVB Multimedia Home Platform (MHP)
DVB-MHP was ratified in 2000 by the DVB Steering Board and was formally adopted by the European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI) (ETSI TS 101 812 (MHP)). This action paved the way for the deployment of the open standard API (Application Program Interface), which now facilitates seamless services across broadcast, telecommunications and computer platforms. MHP defines a generic interface between interactive digital applications and the terminals on which those applications execute. The standard enables digital content providers to address all types of terminals ranging from low to high-end set-top boxes, IDTVs and multimedia PCs. With MHP, DVB extends its successful open standards for broadcast and interactive services in all transmissions networks including satellite, cable terrestrial and wireless systems. With the launch of the MHP conformance testing regime, MHP implementations are now commercially available. Further information on MHP can be found at: www.mhp.org.

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