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Switched On Poles Lead Media Invasion

By **Greg Milam**

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Europe Correspondent

Everyone is talking about immigration - and Europe's shifting population means it is boom time in the media world.



Entrepreneurs, big business, advertisers and media companies all over the continent are scrapping over one of the more lucrative side-effects of European freedom of movement.


The eastern Europeans who have moved west get dozens of new radio stations, new websites, new newspapers. The media world gets a whole new market.

Take the example of Radio Orla: a radio station for Poles. First it was on the internet, then on FM, initially small advertisers, now large corporations.

Perhaps the biggest move of all - on to television networks - is just around the corner.

Radio Orla: A big hit

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Advertisement



George Matlock, a son of Polish parents, funded Orla himself. "We're not talking about a niche market here," he told me.

"There are between 700,000 and a million Poles in the UK so it is a full fledged market, just as with the Asian community."

"We have been approached by a number of terrestrial television companies with a view to making programmes for them and we expect to evolve in that direction significantly.

"We already work with an internet TV company which means people can watch news bulletins, for example, from the website."



George Matlock: 'All to play for'

Major banks and high street stores are increasingly recruiting and advertising with targeted campaigns towards eastern Europeans. Consultancy firms are now setting up specialist departments.

There is no doubt that the internet has revolutionised the speed at which services can spread.

Companies like Orla are moving into a growing gap in the market.

Mr Matlock said: "The decision by the BBC to scrap many of its eastern European services, in hindsight, doesn't seem to have been a very good idea.

"Already we have seen UK groups buying up some of the magazines that have been launched. There is a proliferation of new magazines so I expect there'll be some consolidation there.

"I don't see that consolidation taking place in radio and television yet. It is still an expanding market."

As if to prove his point, in Latvia, a company called the Baltic Media Alliance is celebrating being awarded OFCOM licences to set up two new UK TV channels.