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FastWeb Mediterranea launches residential offer in Genoa

New integrated services for fixed voice, high-speed Internet and TV-on-demand

Genoa, 22 May 2001 – FastWeb Mediterranea (FastWeb 51%, Amga 45%, Aster 4%) is launching an integrated broadband offer featuring fixed telephone services, high-speed Internet access and TV-on-demand for residents of the city of Genoa, following the launch in February of its services offer for business users.

The new development makes Genoa one of the world's most cabled cities, a technologically advanced location that will attract new investors, create new jobs and significantly enhance the quality of life for the local population.

The extension of the offer to the residential market is the result of rapid progress on the plans drawn up by FastWeb – the e.Biscom group company that provides broadband services on proprietary fibre optic telecommunications infrastructure – and Amga (Azienda Mediterranea Gas e Acqua) to cable Genoa through two operating companies formed in June 2000: SasterNet (Amga 75%, Aster 15%, FastWeb 10%) and FastWeb Mediterranea.

So far, five months into the project, SasterNet has already laid 84 km of infrastructure along part of the city's subsoil power and gas networks. It plans to have 250 km of cabling in place by the end of the year.

Specifically, work has been completed on the backbone from Porto Antico to Palazzo Ducale, the backbone from the San Martino hospital to Amga's offices in via SS. Giacomo e Filippo and the city centre, bordered by piazza De Ferrari, via D'Annunzio, piazza Corvetto, piazza Dell'Annunziata, piazza Principe, piazza Brignole and the Fiera. Work is also nearing completion on the Ponente backbone from Voltri to the Matitone.

The plan provides for 14 areas to be cabled in 2001, subdivided into 7 districts – Sampierdarena, Rivarolo, Marassi, Foce, the centre, Manin and Albaro – and coverage of the entire city by the end of the project.

The first residential services became operational in May, in the Sampierdarena district.

The project, to run through 2009, involves investments totalling 330 billion lire, of which 250 to be provided by FastWeb Mediterranea for development of services and 80 by SasterNet for the network infrastructures. FastWeb Mediterranea has budgeted investments totalling 55 billion lire for 2001.

From now on, Genoa city residents, like their counterparts in Milan, will have access to a real alternative to the services provided by the former monopoly operator. The integrated IP network FastWeb is implementing in a number of major Italian cities will provide connectivity for all home, office and business communication devices, offering hugely superior performance at very competitive prices.

The high-speed FastWeb network supports new-generation Internet Video, comprising digital video and audio together with traditional text and images. Its services are already enjoyed by large numbers of users (approximately 8,500 at 31 March 2001).

The residential offer consists of a traditional telephone service together with always-on Internet access for a fixed monthly fee. The key innovation of the FastWeb residential offer, however, is the TV-on-demand service, which allows users to watch programs independently of the broadcasting schedules of traditional channels. Via a special device complete with keyboard and infrared remote control, the TV set is linked directly to the network, where subscribers are offered a wide variety of programs (films, sports, musical videos, news, etc.) to be viewed at the time that suits them best, creating a sort of virtual video rental system. FastWeb customers can select programs from a constantly changing choice of content, including the e.BisMedia channel (with the IlNuovoTG news program, box-office hits from the Universal film studio, Discovery Channel documentaries), Rai Click (an e.Biscom/Rai joint venture for on-demand viewing of 10,000 hours of video archive material and, as from July, Rai broadcasts from the previous 7 days) and the Stream channels, available for the first time without requiring installation of a satellite dish.

The business offer consists of integrated basic telecommunications services (voice, high-speed data, video) at competitive prices, together with a wide range of advanced customised services: *bandwidth on demand*, *virtual private network*, *web hosting* and *web housing*, video conferencing, advanced e.commerce systems, tele-surveillance systems and many other services.

In addition to Genoa and Milan, the FastWeb business offer is now also available for organisations in Turin, and commercial service is due to begin shortly in Rome. Cabling projects are underway in Naples, Grosseto, Reggio Emilia and the Milan hinterland.

FastWeb Mediterranea and SasterNet have more than 40 people working on the project, which has also created an estimated 250 related jobs.

In the interactive age, the cabled multimedia city can act as a driver for cultural change and create new business opportunities.

For more information:

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