Agreement Sealed between FastWeb & Omnitel Vodafone for Optical Fibre

Omnitel Vodafone to use 2,500 Km of network deployed by FastWeb

Milan, August 1, 2001 – Omnitel Vodafone and FastWeb – the e.Biscom Group's (Milan's *Nuovo Mercato:* EBI) broadband telecommunications company which offers integrated services using its own optical fibre infrastructure – have entered into an agreement that will, for the first time, allow the mobile operator to use a fixed-line, optical fibre infrastructure. This will provide Omnitel Vodafone with potentially unlimited transmission capacity and greater autonomy in implementing its network.

FastWeb is to grant Omnitel Vodafone the right to use a section of its 2,500 Km network for a period of 15 years. The agreement covers 1,600 Km of backbone and 900 Km of local loops, which will link 30 of the most important cities in central and northern Italy, where the mobile operator's exchanges and switching centres are located.

The agreement will permit Omnitel Vodafone to exploit the potential offered by the optical fibre network installed by FastWeb, thereby enabling it to handle the growing demand for transmission capacity in the mobile telecommunications sector.

Based on the agreement, Milan, Turin, Genoa, Bologna and Rome are to be the first cities to be linked up to the network by the end of September 2001. The local loops in Novara, Parma, Florence and Pisa will enter service by the end of the year, with the remaining cities to be connected during 2002.

"FastWeb, which started out as an installer of network infrastructure primarily in the Milan area," recalled the company's Chief Executive, **Silvio Scaglia**, "has now extended its coverage to include other major cities in central and northern Italy. This means that we now have a long-distance, optical fibre network capable of meeting the needs of all our customers and Omnitel Vodafone, in particular."

"Thanks to this agreement," explained Omnitel Vodafone's Chief Executive, **Vittorio Colao**, "we will have access to a telecommunications network providing much higher transmission speeds. It will give us the capability to respond to the growing need for broadband services within our network and prepare us for the next generation of GPRS transmission."

For further information

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