FastWeb Presents the World's First TV-based Videocommunication Service

Milan, October 15, 2002 - FastWeb, the e.Biscom Group's (Milan's *Nuovo Mercato:* EBI) broadband telecommunications operator, has announced the world's first TV-based Videocommunication service. The application, which enables telephone users to see the person at the other end of the line on their TV screen, is available to all residential customers in Milan, Rome, Genoa, Turin, Naples and Bologna who have access to the FastWeb fiber-optic network.

The technological features of the new service and its applications in public, private, social and business environments were illustrated by e.Biscom and FastWeb Chief Executive Officer **Silvio Scaglia** at a presentation held this morning at the Foreign Press Club in Rome, attended by Italy's Minister for Communication, **Maurizio Gasparri**.

TV-based Videocommunication, the latest in a series of innovative services developed by FastWeb, deploys a world-first technological solution combining wide scale use of fiber-optics, which support virtually unlimited bandwidth, with the Internet Protocol (IP), the universal communication protocol for integrated management of large volumes of voice, data and video traffic.

To use the TV-based Videocommunication service, subscribers need a television set, a touch-tone telephone, preferably a cordless model, and a small FastWeb TVcam video camera placed on top of or next to the TV. The TVcam needs to be hooked up to the FastWeb connection, to the telephone jack and to the television set, via the scart socket. To make the video call, the user simply presses the asterisk key before keying the telephone number. The TVcam of the person being called rings. When the call is answered on the telephone linked to the TVcam, a normal voice conversation begins. If the person being called wishes to be seen, he or she presses the asterisk key, and the parties can see each other on their TV screen as they speak. If the person being called does not wish to be seen, he or she simply presses the "0" key ("privacy" mode). In this case, the TV screen displays the caller, but not the person being called.

Video calls may be made outside the FastWeb network to PCs with WebCams, video telephones or ISDN videoconferencing stations.

For users who sign up for the service before November 30, 2002, the video calls and TVcam rental will be free for six months. Subsequently, they will be charged 25 eurocents per minute for video calls to FastWeb customers and a monthly rental fee of 11 Euros for the TVcam.

TV-based Videocommunication lets everyone enjoy interactive video contact, with digital quality and advanced real-time capabilities, free from the limitations of inadequate bandwidth. For the first time, a technologically-advanced service is being offered to residential users as well as to businesses.

Apart from opening up new opportunities for person-to-person communication, Videocommunication can be used for a host of applications in the public sector. FastWeb technology supports audio/video links between remote government agencies, public bodies, schools and hospitals to permit significant enhancements in the quality of public services as well as improved cost-effectiveness.

Possible applications include: tele-education and e-learning, with extra lessons from home, parent-teacher communication and links between geographically distant schools; tele-healthcare and e-health, for remote medical consultations, healthcare services and transmission of patient records, samples and X-rays without involving physical movement between sites; tele-working; tele-assistance for the elderly and disabled.

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FastWeb broadband services for business and residential customers. In addition to TV-based Videocommunication, FastWeb offers a range of innovative broadband telecommunications services for business and for residential users. Facilities supported by the FastWeb network include fixed telephony, with no need to be a client with the previous operator, as well as round-the-clock, high-speed Internet access up to 10 Mbit/s, supporting digital video and audio while keeping phone lines free. The FastWeb network is also the first to offer residential users TV-on-demand, for viewing independently of the programming schedules of traditional channels.

The Internet Protocol has also been used to develop an ADSL offer in the cities in which FastWeb fibre optic infrastructures are being rolled out, to enable customers without fibre access to benefit from the provider's innovative telecommunications services at speeds of up to 2 Mbit/s (downstream), (0.512 Mbit/s in upstream), the fastest service currently available on the market.

For business users, FastWeb targets all companies – small, medium and large -- with services catering for the different needs of the various user groups. Applications include video surveillance systems for shops, the "One Solution" system giving small and medium businesses unified management of fixed telephony systems, Internet access and hardware, disaster-recovery solutions for large- and medium-sized companies, Virtual Private Networks deploying the IP for links with remote sites, and the Business-to-Employee (B2E) offer, which enables employees to work from home via high-speed links to the company LAN.

Details about the new service are available on the videocomunicazione.fastweb.it site or on freephone 192 192.

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