Start-up of residential services offer

FastWeb expansion in Turin and Piedmont: the entire city to be cabled by the end of 2003 and a 1,500 Km regional network

Total investment of approximately 550 billion lire

Turin, 5 June 2001 – FastWeb, the company in the e.Biscom Group (e.Biscom S.p.A., Milan, Nuovo Mercato: EBI) that provides integrated broadband services on its own fibre optic telecommunications network, announced the launch of fixed-telephone, high-speed Internet and TV on-demand services for residential users in the northern Italian city of Turin. The company began commercial service of its offer for Turin's business users in April.

The capital of the Italian automobile industry, Turin is poised to become one of Europe's most advanced cities in the use of new-generation telecommunications deploying fibre optics, broadband technology and Internet Video. Resources that will have a huge social and economic impact, given the impressive volume of low-cost cultural and business ties they foster.

The extension of the offer to the residential market is the result of rapid progress on FastWeb's project for the cabling of the city and activation of telecommunications switching centres. In the first six months since work commenced, FastWeb has already laid 200 Km of network infrastructures, and expects to achieve virtually full coverage of Turin by the end of 2003.

In May, the company began marketing its residential services in Turin's Crocetta district. Through the rest of the year, in agreement with the city authorities, services will be extended to the Crocetta Est, Mirafiori Nord, Campidoglio and Monginevro districts.

The FastWeb project for the Turin area involves investments totalling 350 billion lire through 2003.

Work will simultaneously be extended to the Turin hinterland. At regional level, the network will be extended in the Milan direction, covering Novara, Vercelli and Biella, and in the Genoa direction, covering Asti and Alessandria. A total of 1,500 Km of cabling will be laid, for additional investments of approximately 200 billion lire.

The outlay is part of FastWeb's national plan to deploy its IP network in Italy's main cities, permitting simultaneous connection of all devices in homes, offices and businesses for superior performance at competitive prices.
Turin and the region of Piedmont are the key development focus in north-west Italy. Thanks in part to the cabling project, the entire area is undergoing a major business, urban and cultural transformation, boosting its national and international competitive potential. To ensure that the territory enjoys all the benefits of the current changes, FastWeb will continue to work closely with local authorities and the ITP agency for investment in Turin and Piedmont.

With marketing of FastWeb's business services launched in April, now Turin residents, like families in Milan and Genoa, will be able to enjoy a real alternative to the services provided by the former monopoly.

The high-speed FastWeb network supports new-generation Internet – Internet Video – combining digital video and audio with text and traditional images.

The residential offer includes a traditional telephone service, plus always-on Internet access – keeping the telephone line free – and TV on-demand.

TV on-demand is in fact the key innovation of the FastWeb residential offer. With this service, which is already available in the Crocetta district and will be gradually extended to the rest of Turin, for the first time families can watch programs when they wish, without having to follow the broadcasting schedules of the 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, music videos, news, etc.) to be viewed at the time that suits them best, creating a virtual video rental system. FastWeb customers are offered 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 FastWeb business offer consists of advanced flexible broadband services for various types of organisations: small offices and retailers, small and medium businesses and large corporations. The infinite potential of fibre optics and IP technology makes for advanced, modular affordable services. FastWeb offers business users an integrated package of basic broadband telecommunications services – fixed-line telephony, high-speed Internet access and data transmission – for a fixed monthly fee, together with a series of innovative Internet consultancy services with turnkey packages that are viable only on broadband: web sites, applications, bandwidth on demand, virtual private network, web hosting and web housing, audio-videostreaming, video conferencing, advanced e.commerce systems, tele-surveillance systems and many other services.

In addition to Turin, Genoa and Milan, FastWeb will shortly begin commercial service in Rome. Cabling projects are underway in Naples, Grosseto, Reggio Emilia and the Milan hinterland.

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