

PRESS RELEASE

**TELECOM ITALIA SPARKLE, TELESPAZIO, HUGHES AND INTELSAT
BRING SATELLITE BROADBAND TO EUROPE AND NORTH AFRICA VIA
THE NEW MARCO POLO PLATFORM**

*Italian companies and institutions based abroad to be given global broadband
access thanks to new technology partnership*

Rome, 11 September 2006 – Telespazio (a Finmeccanica/Alcatel company), Telecom Italia Sparkle, Hughes and Intelsat today announced the launch of a new satellite platform, “Marco Polo”, which will provide satellite broadband services to Italian companies and institutions in eastern Europe and north Africa.

The new platform, which Telespazio will operate from its Fucino Space Centre, using next-generation technology from Hughes and the capabilities of Intelsat’s high-powered IS-901 satellite, will allow Telecom Italia’s range of terrestrial and satellite broadband services for businesses, government bodies and institutions to cover the entire region.

The services offered by Marco Polo will enable Italian companies based abroad to benefit from the competitive advantage of broadband even in regions where the terrestrial infrastructure is underdeveloped.

Marco Polo uses satellite as its only means of connection, and provides the same high-quality services as those that can be obtained from terrestrial broadband. The new platform offers internet access, as well as allowing customers to create private virtual networks via IP, and providing the means to achieve business continuity. Users will access the service via a satellite dish (less than a metre in diameter) and a LAN modem.

“With the launch of this new broadband satellite, Telespazio has strengthened the role of the Fucino Space Centre as an important telecommunications hub for Europe and the Mediterranean basin”, said Giuseppe Veredice, CEO of Telespazio. “In addition, we are helping to develop regions which have high growth potential, but which often lack adequate terrestrial communications infrastructure”.

The Marco Polo platform will be the natural extension of the Business Sat service to the international markets. Business Sat has been successfully offered to Telecom Italia’s domestic business customers for more than two years now.

“With the new satellite platform, we have further expanded our range of Hyperway @broad solutions for Italian multinationals based abroad”, commented Stefano Mazzitelli, CEO of Telecom Italia Sparkle, “making it more complete and competitive in regions such as eastern Europe and north Africa, which are of great commercial significance for us”.

“We are proud to be a part of this satellite service”, said Pradman Kaul, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Hughes Network Systems, LLC. “The high performances of our technology mean that the platform can provide excellent quality value-added services and solutions such as digital signage, staff communications, content provision, access continuity and managed network services, to the benefit of companies and institutions worldwide”

“The provision of this new service is part of Intelsat’s strategy to become a trusted supplier of solutions for our customers, with whom we operate in close partnership to create new networks and telecoms services all over the world”, stated Stephen Spengler, Senior Vice-President Europe, Africa, Middle East and Asia Pacific Sales at Intelsat. “Telespazio and Hughes Europe are both important customers and leading providers of telecommunications services, and we are confident they will join in our efforts to offer high-quality connection services”.

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