

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE DEFINES FUTURE FOR BROADBAND MULTIMEDIA VIA SATELLITE

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EUTELSAT outlines its vision to provide multimedia and high-speed Internet delivery with OPEN-SKY

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The future of broadband via satellite was the subject of a recent international conference organized by leading satellite operator EUTELSAT. The highlight of the Broadband Multimedia Conference was the presentation of OPEN-SKY, a major new initiative to build a new open standard multimedia and high-speed Internet service.

The Broadband Multimedia Conference, held at the University of Bologna, attracted more than 600 delegates from 33 countries who charted the future of broadband satellite. Delegates from the telecommunications, government and broadcasting sectors, ISPs and content providers discussed present and future broadband services. An international array of speakers in the Internet and content provider fields presented case studies of how they presently use satellite to deliver their services. Highlights from the event are already being streamed on EUTELSAT's website (www.eutelsat.com) and will shortly be rebroadcast free-to-air from HOT BIRD 3 (downlink frequency 12.111 GHz, vertical polarization, symbol rate 27.5, FEC 3/4).

In his keynote address EUTELSAT Director General Giuliano Berretta outlined his vision for the introduction of an open standard service platform delivering rich media, audio and personal broadcasting services to users' PCs via satellite. This major new initiative entitled OPEN-SKY gives consumers access to a full range of interactive multimedia services including rich multimedia content, fast file delivery, personal broadcasting services and high-speed Internet access.

OPEN-SKY is already running from EUTELSAT's W3 satellite at 7 degrees East and carrying 20 unencrypted international video services that are being streamed at speeds from 256 to 700 kilobits/s using MPEG4 encapsulated over IP. A retransmission of the Bologna conference proceedings in high-speed streaming video (<http://opensky.eutelsat.net>) will be added in early May. This offer is soon expected to grow to nearer 50 videostreaming services. Users need a satellite dish and PC equipped with an add-in card to receive these new services and can select between accessing content on-line or retrieving content delivered by satellite and stored in their PC in off-line mode.

EUTELSAT is investing significant revenue and resources to ensure the success of the new platform and is partnering with multiple content and service providers to deliver rich multimedia content to users.

The second day of the conference opened with a live duplex with Sir Arthur C. Clarke in Sri Lanka utilizing a two-way Ku-band satellite link on EUTELSAT's SESAT satellite. Speaking to delegates, Sir Arthur spoke about how technology developments are realizing the dream of global communications. He said: "The developments of communications now mean that the world is getting smaller and smaller. Advances such as those provided by EUTELSAT marks the future of digital communication."

Speaking about the conference, EUTELSAT's Director General, Giuliano Berretta said: "At EUTELSAT we believe that satellite will play an important role for the delivery of multimedia broadband services - particularly for those users who do not have access to other forms of high-speed access. Initiatives such as OPEN-SKY demonstrate EUTELSAT's commitment to being a world-leader in the provision of satellite broadband services. We organized our first Broadband Multimedia Conference to create an open exchange forum to discuss the commercial, economic and technical potential for broadband via satellite."

Other themes addressed during the conference included interactive services for distance learning, tele-medicine, two-way services for Internet Service Providers, pay-per-use bandwidth using EUTELSAT's range of D-SAT products, and mobile voice and positioning services using EMSAT. Delegates also had an opportunity to see live demonstrations of EUTELSAT services and meet with host partners and customers in an exhibition area.

The location of the conference was selected to honour the home-town of Guglielmo Marconi. Under the patronage of the Guglielmo Marconi Foundation, EUTELSAT inaugurated celebrations to mark the centenary of the first transatlantic wireless transmission by Marconi. This will also be marked by the launch of two new satellites (ATLANTIC BIRD 1 and 2) that will provide connectivity between the Americas and Europe. These satellites will be dedicated to Marconi - drawing parallels between his historical broadcast and the modern day satellite equivalent linking the Americas with Europe.

Also in Bologna, on April 9, an Honorary Doctorate (Laurea honoris causa) in Management Engineering was conferred upon Giuliano Berretta by the Rector and Senate of the University of Bologna in the premises of the University's Great Hall. The Honorary Doctorate was conferred in recognition of Mr Berretta's clear understanding of the characteristics of management engineering and his decisive leadership qualities that are founded on a solid grasp of technical-scientific issues and a thorough sense of economic organization.

About EUTELSAT

As one of the world's leading satellite operators, Paris-based EUTELSAT enables TV and radio broadcasters, Internet service providers, telecommunications companies and corporations to transmit and receive content throughout Europe and Africa, large parts of Asia and the Americas. EUTELSAT was the first operator in Europe to deliver DVB consumer television and today broadcasts 850 channels to over 84 million satellite and cable homes, making it one of the largest audiences in the world. Fifty-six per cent of EUTELSAT capacity is used for television broadcasting and just over 40 per cent for services that include high-speed Internet access and Internet backbone connections. EUTELSAT turnover for 2000 was €685 million, representing a 46 per cent increase over 1999. EUTELSAT operates a system of 19 satellites, uses capacity on three additional satellites and has a total of seven satellites in construction.

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