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News Items

Telephone

20 new base stations were recently put into operation for *Natel C* and 37 for *Natel D GSM*.

Teleinformatics

The Berne-Bollwerk telegraph office was finally closed down at the end of 1994. Service numbers 110/128 have since been diverted to Zurich, where telegrams for the whole of German-speaking Switzerland are now handled.

46 lines were put into operation by the *Leased Circuit Service Centre (LCSC)*; two of them are with overseas and one is a transit line.

Radio, Television and Radiocommunications

The following fixed microwave radio links became operative: in the regional network Gebidem-Zermatt with a transmission capacity of 140 Mbit/s; as a feeder for the *Natel* base stations between Gailingen (Germany) and Schaffhausen (4×2 Mbit/s), Emmetti and Giswil subscriber exchange (4×2 Mbit/s), Ermatingen and Wolfsberg (4×2 Mbit/s), Les Brenets and Le Col des Roches (16×2 Mbit/s); as a VHF modulation feeder between Hoher Kasten and Vaduz (4×2 Mbit/s); for a leased line between Hoher Kasten and Schwäbrig Gais (4×2 Mbit/s) and for a remote unit Villa-Vrin (4×2 Mbit/s) and Campo Blenio-Olivone (16×2 Mbit/s).

An Intermediate Data Rate (IDR) link with Venezuela was set up via the *Intelsat* satellite at 325.5° East (Atlantic Ocean) and five Frequency Division Multiple Access (FDMA) links with the People's Republic of Congo via the satellite at 335.5° East (also Atlantic Ocean). During the month under review three Single Channel per Carrier (SCPC) links with Nepal and one IDR link with Hong Kong went into operation.

Eight more base stations for *Telepage Swiss Network II* were put into operation.

The Channel 12 transmitter at the Niederhorn station was recently closed down. In future this channel will be used for DAB trials (Digital Audio Broadcasting). The Swiss Television DRS programme will now be broadcast on Channel 53.

Miscellaneous

The first satellite in the *Intelsat V* series has been in orbit for 14 years. With a planned lifetime of seven years it should have been closed down in 1987 or 1988. Its operational lifetime, which is largely dependent on fuel reserves, could be more than doubled by cutting stationkeeping manoeuvres as only East-West position errors were corrected. The satellite will probably be used for telephony, video and data transmission at a position of 319.5° East until October 1997.

A team from the Leuk satellite earth station installed and tested a 3.7 m satellite earth station on a building in Tirana which houses Albanian Telecom. The ground station had been previously tested in Leuk. 30 telephone channels between Zurich-Herdern and the new exchange in Tirana could be put into operation via this antenna and the *Intelsat* satellite $603/325^\circ$ East and the Zurich-3 earth station. Thus the first digital exchange in Albania was connected to the European digital network, which makes telephone calling and data transmission to Albania a great deal easier and in some cases possible for the very first time.

Eutelsat buys the third «Hot Bird» satellite. The Director General of *Eutelsat* recently signed the corresponding contract with Matra Marconi Space. As the fourth satellite positioned at 13° East, «Hot Bird 3» will beam television and radio programmes for reception by direct reception equipment, cable connections and community antenna installations. The satellite will be co-positioned there with *Eutelsat* II-F1, «Hot Bird 1», which will start up soon, and «Hot Bird 2» which is still under construction. The decision to purchase «Hot Bird 3» was confirmed at the end of November last year by the Council of *Eutelsat* Signatories. This was oc-

casioned by the great demand for capacities on the *Eutelsat* satellites «Hot Bird 1» and «Hot Bird 2». The «Hot Bird 3» television satellite is a «high power» satellite with 20 transponders and operates in the DBS frequency band (Direct Broadcast Satellites). The technical configuration of the satellite permits flexible use: programme suppliers can choose between two different illumination zones – Hot Bird 3's «widebeam» covers all of Europe and reaches as far as Central Asia and the Gulf States. The «superbeam» is concentrated on Europe and is particularly suitable for the reception of digital-beamed television signals with antennas of less than 45 cm in diameter.

Research and Development

The international telecommunication satellite organization *Intelsat* has presented new equipment which permits the simultaneous transmission of ten high-quality television channels (or 50 television channels of standard quality). These coders/decoders (Codec), which operate with MDP-8 modulation, can also be used for the restoration of fibre optic cables with a data rate of 155 Mbit/s. A further trump is the ability to transmit ATM signals.