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News Items

Telephone

Six more *Natel C* base stations and 14 new *Natel D GSM* base stations went into operation.

Teleinformatics

79 new links were set up via the *Leased Circuits Service Centre*, five of them with overseas.

Radio, Television, Radiocommunications

In the regional network a *fixed microwave radio link* between Brigue and Münster became operative, with a transmission capacity of 140 Mbit/s; two fixed links from Kronberg to Schwägalp (4×2 Mbit/s) and one link in Lungern (4×2 Mbit/s) also went into operation as feeders for *Natel* base stations.

An IDR (Intermediate Data Rate) link with Chile was set up via the *Intelsat satellite* at 325.5° east (Atlantic Ocean). On the satellite at 335.5° east (also Atlantic Ocean) two additional SSTDMA speech circuits (Satellite Switching Time Division Multiple Access) were set up with Kenya and four more SSTDMA speech circuits with South Africa.

Miscellaneous

With two VW-T satellite ground stations and a team of specialists on the spot at the *World Economic Forum held at the Congress Centre in Davos*, Telecom PTT offered satellite connections as well as various standard services such as *Natel*, *Pager* and *Fax*.

At the *Lauberhorn ski races in Wengen* the MediaLink section of Telecom PTT provided transmission of three races for the Swiss Radio & Television Corporation SRG — two men's downhill races and a men's slalom. For the first time signals were transmitted by using a combination of optical fibre links and microwave radio links. In addition two radio camera links were used and videosignals were transmitted to and

from two helicopters. Two terrestrial links were set up, one for national and one for international signal distribution. The signals were made available to 14 other television companies and for this purpose 14 commentator's lines had to be set up. In addition three national radio (SRG) and ten international radio stations were on the spot, for which audio lines were provided.

Cooperation between Switzerland and Poland in Telecommunications. Telecom PTT has agreed with the Polish telecommunications company *Telekomunikacja Polska S.A. (TPSA)* to develop models for joint cooperation in Poland. The Polish Minister of Posts and Telecommunications, Andrzej Zieliński, TPSA President Jacek Gadomski and Felix Rosenberg, Director General of Telecom PTT, recently signed a relevant memorandum in Berne. They agreed to set up a mixed working group to look into opportunities for cooperation. Poland is one of the most interesting foreign markets for Telecom PTT. Market prospects in that country were examined in detail by Telecom prior to the Minister's visit. It is intended that the Unisource partner companies also participate in the cooperation between Poland and Switzerland. A jointly developed training programme is to ensure the timely availability of the trained personnel required for the various business activities.

At the *extraordinary meeting of CEPT-ERC* in Bonn, the ERC approved the recommendation concerning the channel raster in the 12.75 to 13.25 and 17.7 to 19.7 GHz bands. It was also announced that the European Radio Office (ERO) is currently working on software which will provide a uniform interface to various national topographic data banks and that the ERO will be representing CEPT at the next World Radio Conference (WRC-95) in Geneva. It was also announced that NATO agrees to the use of the 380 to 385 and 390 to 395 MHz frequency bands for emergency radio services in accordance with CEPT recommendation T/R 02-02 and that it is forming a new project team (ECR/ECTRA) for mobile satellite communication.

Research and Development

Casio creates a videophone from a television set. On 21 February Casio Computers brought an analogue moving image telephone system — the *Casiotele-LT70* — onto the market, which links a normal telephone to a home television set. It uses a data channel of 14.4 kbit/s and can thus refresh the picture every 3.5 seconds. Fine resolution means that a picture of 512×224 pixels is available with a frame frequency of 30 Hz. The Codec is based on the JPEG standard (frame reduction to 1/15, sound compression to 1/10 of the original), yet carries a large number of manufacturer specific solutions. The price is quoted as 'under \$ 1,000'. To begin with, Casio Computers will be producing 7,000 systems per month — also for export.

Information from Japan — via credit card. There is still a lack of current news from Japan (which is one of the reasons why we have introduced this information service for our readers). According to reports from Japan, *Subaru International* — a company which we unfortunately know nothing about — has started to offer Japanese patent information via Internet. In addition, the company provides online machine translations from Japanese into English and vice versa — also via Internet. Online shopping is the next service — and all of this at fixed rates: the flat basic fee for an inquiry is \$ 5; patent information or translation is charged at the rate of \$ 77 per A-4 page. To make things easy for the occasional user, too, fees can be charged to a credit card.

Mitsubishi currently supplying samples of the MPEG2-Decoder. Since the end of 1994 samples of the M65770FP one-chip decoder can be obtained from Mitsubishi. This conforms to the latest MPEG2 standards and reduces video data to 4 % of source data. There is an 'on chip' correcting circuit to optimize picture quality. The samples cost over \$ 500; however, series production will commence during the course of 1995 and the price should then drop rapidly to around \$ 100.