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Russia Signs Telecom Agreements With Canada

At the invitation of Communications Minister Perrin Beatty, Russia's Minister of Posts and Telecommunications, Vladimir Bulgak, visited Canada in February to develop a new framework for co-operation in telecommunications between the two countries.

During his visit to INTER COMM 93 in Vancouver, Minister Bulgak signed two Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with Minister Beatty. The first MOU identifies several areas of co-operation in telecommunications, including research and development, long-term forecasting, technical standards and certification, frequency co-ordination, spectrum management and licensing of radiocommunications, market analysis, and telecommunications policy and regulation. This

agreement marks a new closeness in telecommunications relations between Canada and Russia.

For the second MOU, Canada's Department of Communications co-ordinated a "Canada Inc." approach involving Northern Telecom, Bell Canada International and Telesat Canada. The agreement, which was co-signed on the Russian side by Intertelecom and Moscow City Telephone Network, will consolidate existing partnerships and lead to future alliances among Canadian and Russian companies.

The MOUs should open doors to Canadian companies wishing to participate in the development of Russia's telecom infrastructure and, in particular, that country's planned multimillion-dollar satellite telecommunication system.

manufacturer. Major international players active in the French market include ITT, AT&T, Siemens, Philips, Ericsson and Northern Telecom (especially through its investment in Matra). Most successful foreign-based telecommunications companies operating in France are affiliated with a French partner.

Several French companies are active in the PABX market, including Alcatel, Matra Communications (the second largest French telecommunications manufacturer) and SAT.

The telecommunications sector in France is overseen by the Ministry of PTE, which regulates the industry through the Direction de la Réglementation Générale (DRG). The Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel (CSA) regulates the broadcast and cable industries. All equipment connected to the public telephone network in France or using the radio waves must be approved by the DRG. The actual testing of equipment is done by the Centre national d'études des télécommunications (CNET).

Market Opportunities

As of January 1, 1993, competition has been reinforced for value-added services, including electronic mail, database access services and the resale of basic data communications services. With foreign telephone companies beginning to enter the French market, some Canadian companies find that the drive to develop competitive solutions has created new opportunities.

Other key market segments in France include mobile communications, network management equipment for France Télécom, cable and satellite broadcasting, and

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Trend Towards Competition Opens Telecom Markets in France

There appears to be a new climate in the French telecommunications marketplace. The regulatory trend is favouring more open competition and there is evidence that supply restrictions are beginning to be alleviated, albeit slowly, since the EC proposed a more evolutionary path toward telecommunications reform.

France Télécom, formerly part of the Ministry of PTE (Postes, Télécommunications et Espace), became an autonomous corporation in 1991. While France Télécom

remains state-owned and retains its status as the monopoly provider of public voice services, competition now exists in the value-added services and mobile communications marketplace.

Many telecommunications products and services in France are provided by independent subsidiaries of a holding company controlled by France Télécom. In the public telephone market, the majority of equipment is supplied by the French multinational Alcatel NV, the world's largest telecommunications

