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News Items

Telephone

Two voice band data links each were put into operation with *Zimbabwe* and *Togo* via INTELSAT 335.5° east in the *INTELSAT network* via the Leuk-2A satellite ground station. In addition, a link was put into operation with a transmission capacity of 2048 kbit/s for the video conference service with *Bahrein* via the Leuk-3A ground station and INTELSAT 60° east. The number of video conference connections with the *USA* via the Geneva/Vernier regional station and INTELSAT 307° east has greatly increased. An additional connection (Voice Band Data/64 kbit/s) was put into operation in the *EUTELSAT network* in February with *Sweden* via Leuk-4 and EUTELSAT 16° east.

Eight further base stations for the *Natel C* were put into operation in February.

The following microwave radio links were put into operation for the *Natel C*: the sections *Ascona-Cardada*, *Cardada-Avegno*, *Monte Tamaro-Monte di Motti*, *Delémont-Les Ordon*, *Les Ordon-Courtemaîche* and *Les Ordon-Saulcy* with a transmission capacity of 4 × 2 Mbit/s each as well as the section *Steinen-Lauerz* with a transmission capacity of 2 Mbit/s.

The *automatic waking service* can newly be dialled from the *Natel C* mobile telephone network. The new *Chur alarm clock installation* which was put into operation in December 1990 now additionally takes over *Natel C* waking calls from the whole of Switzerland. Individual waking orders can be given without assistance by dialling the number 150, completed by the waking time information. For standing orders, the number 081 145 (Chur subscriber service) must be dialled.

Teleinformatics

The new *leased line data system MIDAS* was put into operation in all 17 telecommunications offices by the end of 1990. At present it handles approximately 45,000 distant, regional and local lines throughout Switzerland as well as international and intercontinental leased lines.

The *leased line control centre* put 25 digital leased lines (19 × 64 kbit/s, 1 × 128 kbit/s, 1 × 256 kbit/s, 1 × 384 kbit/s, 2 × 768 kbit/s, 1 × 2 Mbit/s) as well as eleven analogue leased lines into operation. Up to now the leased line control centre looked after all intercontinental analogue and digital leased lines. Since 1 February they also look after the *national disturbance registration service* for customers with European digital leased lines of 64 kbit/s and more.

Recently the *Videotex Central in the St. Gall main post office building* which supplies the telephone networks of the Bellinzona, Chur, Rapperswil, St. Gall (including Liechtenstein) and Winterthur telecommunications offices was put into operation. With this fifth central, the Zurich office, which from now only supplies the Zurich telecommunications office and a part of the Rapperswil (network group 01) telecommunications office, can be relieved.

The *X.29 Gateway to the French Teletel* was put into operation after a short development time of only eight months. The research and development project was put into effect with the usual PC hardware and operational software. The Swiss videotex customer thus has the possibility of taking advantage of several thousand French data banks. The code conversion from Profil 2 to the Videotex Profil 1, which is used in Switzerland, is carried out in the Gateway.

Radio, Television, Radiocommunications

In the *Lohn* and *Avers* broadcasting stations the DRS R and DRS 3 *FM programmes* were officially put into operation. At the same time a transmitter was replaced, and RDS was put into operation in the Lohn station.

The *European Broadcasting Union (EBU)* will lease four transponders of a *EUTELSAT II* satellite, according to a new agreement with *EUTELSAT*, and will take an option for two more. The four new transponders can be used from January 1993 onwards. With these, the European Broadcasting Union will reach all 39 members in 32 countries of Europe, the Middle East and Northern Africa. The

connections are to serve for the exchange of news, sport and entertainment programmes between the members. Last year more than 14,000 newscasts and 1500 programmes were exchanged.

The signatory countries France, Germany, Italy and Sweden have authorized *EUTELSAT* to make preparations for *purchasing of direct broadcasting satellite* which should be put into orbit in the middle of 1993. As forerunner of the *EUROPESAT* satellites, presumably to be introduced in 1996, it should bridge the direct broadcasting bottleneck and should be very suitable for high definition television (HDTV).

The sixth meeting of the *ETSI working group RES 2* (Subtechnical Committee) took place in Rovaniemi (Finland). The group is responsible for equipment specifications for the land mobile radio service. At the meeting, 'ETSI Technical Reports' about measuring methods and measuring uncertainties as well as documentation regarding the security aspects by the electromagnetic radiation were adopted among others.

Miscellaneous

An *ad hoc group of the CCITT* met in Geneva. It was commissioned by the plenary assembly of 1988 to examine the working methods and structure of the study committees and to work out recommendations for increased efficiency. The group proposed to dissolve some of the study committees or to consolidate them, to update the mandate of various committees, to regularly approve all recommendations basically by correspondence according to resolution No. 2 as well as to examine the study progress annually by a Strategic Review Group and to allow the possibility of commissioning new study programmes anytime.

The *Voluntary Group of Experts (VGE)* met for the first time also in Geneva at the seat of the International Telecommunications Union (UIT). The Plenipotentiary Assembly of Nice 1989 gave the group the task of simplifying the radio regulations, which have today grown to three volumes (approx. 2000 pages), and of finding a way to improve the usage of the radio spectrum.