



EU'S SATELLITE-BASED CONNECTIVITY SYSTEM



The European Commission has selected a consortium of European satellite manufacturers, operators and service providers, telco operators and launch service providers to study the design, development and launch of a European-owned space-based communication system.

The study will assess the feasibility of a new initiative aiming to strengthen European digital sovereignty and provide secure connectivity for citizens, commercial enterprises and public institutions as well as providing global coverage for rural and 'not-spot' areas. Complementing Copernicus and Galileo, this new EU flagship programme, once given the green light, would fully exploit the synergies of the technological potential akin to the Digital and Space industries. The contract value of the year-long feasibility study amounts to €7.1 million.

This European sovereign infrastructure is set to benefit a large range of sectors, including road and maritime transport, air traffic and

control, autonomous vehicle development as well as many Internet of Things (IoT) applications. It is intended to offer enhanced security in the transmission and storage of information and data supporting the needs of various users such as governmental agencies, finance & banking companies, science networks, critical infrastructures and data centres.

The consortium members are: Airbus, Arianespace, Eutelsat, Hispasat, OHB, Orange, SES, Telespazio and Thales Alenia Space.

MORGAN STANLEY ACQUIRES TELE COLUMBUS

Morgan Stanley



Morgan Stanley is all set to acquire the majority stake in Germany's second largest cable operator Tele Columbus.

Kublai GmbH, which belongs to Morgan Stanley Infrastructure Partners, is offering €3.25 per share as part of a voluntary public takeover bid.

If the acquisition is successful, Kublai guarantees a €475 million capital increase with which the highly indebted cable company intends to repay part of its liabilities. The future owner also wants to invest up to €75 million in the expansion of Tele Columbus' fibre optic network. Currently, 2.4 million households are connected to the company's broadband network. By 2030, around 2.0 million of these households are to be supplied with gigabit bandwidths via fibre optics.

Tele Columbus shareholder Rocket Internet has already agreed to sell its 13.36% stake to Kublai.

NEW OTT LAW IN RUSSIA

Russia's State Duma is

planning a new OTT bill that will prohibit foreigners owning more than 20% of OTT services with a Russian audience of more than 50%.

The current legislation limits foreign ownership to 20% only to services whose share of Russian users is less than 50%.

Foreign ownership of over 20% is only allowed with the permission of a government commission, and an exception is made for local service with a Russian audience of over 50%. In this case, any level of foreign ownership is allowed if such a service is a legal Russian entity.

Netflix already operates in Russia in partnership with National Media Group (NMG).

Industry sources believe the new bill is aimed at services such as Russia's leading OTT platform ivi, which after a proposed IPO will have a foreign ownership share of more than 20%.

MEDIASET PLANS NEW GAMEPLAN



Mediaset is set continue to push ahead with its plan for a 'pan-European hub of free TV'.

"We want to build the pan-European hub of free TV. And I am proud that an Italian company will do it. You need a player of sufficient size to stay in the game with the American giants: alone, no one in Europe will make it," said Mediaset CEO Pier Silvio Berlusconi.

The long running dispute with Vivendi, the operator of Canal Plus, stretches back to 2016 when a deal for the French media conglomerate to buy pay-DTT operation Mediaset Plus collapsed in acrimony. ■