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Japanese Competition Authority Approves the 3G Patent Platform

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Paris, 20 December 2000 — The Japanese Fair Trade Commission (JFTC) has issued a positive opinion concerning the commercial operation of the 3G Patent Platform, following an extensive review during the last ten months. The 3G Patent Platform was deemed to be pro-competitive and to serve the interests of the global telecommunication industry.

The other two major competition authorities, namely the European Commission (EC) and the US Department of Justice (DoJ), Anti-Trust Division, are in the final stage of their review and the outcome of their findings is anticipated soon. Pending the approval from the EC and DoJ, commercial service provision should commence in spring 2001 and will be open to all interested companies.

The 3G Patent Platform has been defined by the world's leading wireless companies for the provision of services for evaluating, certifying and licensing Essential Patents for third generation mobile communication systems. Commercial services will be provided online within a new service company, 3G Patents Ltd, currently being established under English law.

3G Patents Ltd is being set up with the aim of handling the complexity of acquiring patent licenses for 3G mobile communication systems under known terms and conditions, which will make 3G technology more affordable to all players (e.g. operators, suppliers, chip manufacturers, service providers, end-users). By making the technology more affordable, the 3G market will be catalysed and the business case will become more attractive. Unlike GSM, where owners of essential technology amounted to no more than about twenty companies, more than one hundred companies are likely to own patents essential for realising 3G mobile communication systems and the actual number of essential patents will increase considerably.

« The JFTC decision is a landmark event for such a co-operative industry initiative, bringing about an innovative approach for fast technology transfer. Every effort will be made to encourage all industry players to use the services of 3G Patents Ltd which has been set up to benefit the whole mobile industry, » said Brian Kearsey, Managing Director (Designate) of 3G Patents Ltd.

Background for journalists

The 3G Patent Platform specification has been defined by more than forty international wireless companies between February 1998 and June 1999 within the framework of the UMTS IPR Working Group and the UMTS Intellectual Property Association (UIPA). The preparatory work for the launch of 3G Patents Ltd has been undertaken fourteen months ago by some of the world's leading 3G operators and suppliers and trade organisations within the framework of an industry alliance called the 3G Patent Platform Partnership (3G3P). Nonetheless, the services provided by 3G Patents Ltd are available to all companies world-wide.

Alcatel, Bosch, Cegetel, ETRI, France Telecom, Fujitsu, Korea Telecom, KPN, LG, Matsushita, Mitsubishi Electric, NEC, NTT DoCoMo, Samsung, SK Telecom, Siemens, Sonera, Sony, Telecom Italia Mobile. The GSM Association and ETNO (European Telecommunication Network Operators) are Associate Partners.

For more information, please contact :

Dr. Serge RAES,
Business Development Director
3G Patent Platform Partnership
Tel : +33 1 3459 0864 or 63

Japanese Competition Authority Approves the 3G Patent Platform

Mobile : +33 1 4076 1109

Fax : +33 1 3459 0864

E-Mail : serge.raes@alcatel.fr

22, rue de Beynes

F-78450 Chavenay

France

A dedicated website should become operational soon at <http://www.3Gpatents.com>

Contact press@www.alcatel.com