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EUTELSAT TAKES SATELLITE BROADBAND AND WI-FI TO NEW HEIGHTS FOR THE 100TH TOUR DE FRANCE AT ALPE D'HUEZ

Eutelsat combines two-way satellite broadband with Wi-Fi for wireless Internet access at an altitude of over 1,800 metres

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Eutelsat, one of the world's leading satellite operators, is bringing new broadband solutions to Alpe d'Huez for the 100th anniversary of the *Tour de France* as the event arrives in the Alpine resort on July 13 after one of the legendary climbs by Armstrong, Ulrich, Virenque and others. Eutelsat has set up broadband Internet access at three sites in Alpe d'Huez, at an altitude of 1,800 metres. The three sites are connected to Wi-Fi hot spots for wireless Internet access which have been set up by France Telecom.

Broadband reaches new heights

Six PCs have been installed at the Alpe d'Huez Tourist Office, 'le Sporting' restaurant and the ski resort's Internet Café. Eutelsat's D-Star service is being used to provide a two-way satellite broadband connection at 2 Mbps with no need for a connection to a local terrestrial network. A similar system was successfully demonstrated during the winter season at 'Les Marmottes' restaurant at 2,400 metres in the French Alps, allowing locals and skiers to surf the web at the highest altitude in France.

With this new initiative, Eutelsat, with the support of France Telecom, is demonstrating the full capabilities of secure wireless access by combining satellite Internet and Wi-Fi technologies. With the service demonstrated in Alpe d'Huez users can establish a broadband Internet connection with their laptop or PDA without having to plug it in.

Eutelsat has also installed satellite reception at le Sporting restaurant for live broadcasts of the Tour de France on Eurosport and France Television channels which are delivered in the TPS digital platform that broadcasts through Eutelsat's HOT BIRD™ satellites.

A new service for residents and tourists

The Internet connection installed at the Tourist Office will remain after the *Tour de France* moves on to its next stop. This will enable the resort to offer new broadband services to its many visitors during the summer and ski seasons. Holidaymakers and locals in the region will be able to connect to broadband Internet in order to access their e-mails and surf the Web at high speed for business or pleasure.

"By bringing cost-effective and high-performance broadband Internet access, satellite is the only technology that makes it possible to quickly and effectively address the digital divide in rural and isolated communities", commented Giuliano Berretta, CEO of Eutelsat. "We are very happy to bring this service to Alpe d'Huez in order to satisfy residents and the many holiday makers who expect efficient Internet connections."

“Satellites are an indispensable complement to ADSL technologies in the provision of broadband Internet access. By combining satellite with Wi-Fi technology we can address diversified user requirements, as in Alpe d’Huez”, declared Jean-Jacques Damlamian, Senior Vice-President Technology and Innovation, France Telecom group, and President of the Supervisory Board of Eutelsat. “Eutelsat’s satellites provide the coverage and the power needed to reach throughout France and we are very pleased to be bringing broadband solutions for residents and visitors on this stop in the Tour de France.”

An easy-access offer

Broadband Internet via satellite is available today through Eutelsat in France, Europe, Africa and the Middle East. Installing the system does not require any particular authorisation and enables high-speed connection at up to 2 Mbps on the receive side and 512 Kbps on the transmit side. Installation takes three hours and requires basic equipment: a small box (20/30/5 cm) to provide the link to the computer (PC or Mac) and a small antenna (less than a metre diameter).

About Eutelsat

With capacity commercialised on 23 satellites that provide coverage from the Americas to the Pacific, Eutelsat S.A. is one of the world's leading satellite operators. Eutelsat's satellite infrastructure gives it the flexibility to offer direct-to-home broadcasting, video distribution and contribution services, corporate network solutions and a portfolio of IP applications including broadband Internet access and Internet backbone connections. From its strategic HOT BIRD™ orbital position at 13 degrees East and other orbital positions, Eutelsat’s satellites broadcast more than 1,300 television and 800 radio stations and reach an overall audience of 107 million cable and satellite homes.

www.eutelsat.com