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DIF responds to European Commission interoperability review

“This review is part of the important debate about how Europe can realise the full potential of interactive television in the e-society while maintaining the rapid roll-out of digital networks,” said Sheila Cassells, Chair of the Digital Interoperability Forum (DIF) and Head of Economic Policy at BSkyB, commenting on today’s publication by the European Commission of a consultation document about interoperability in digital interactive television. “The Digital Interoperability Forum welcomes the informed approach adopted by the Commission and its commitment to listen to the views of all industry players.”

Ms Cassells added, “Industry has already delivered a great deal through investments which have provided tens of millions of European households with access to an unprecedented choice of interactive services and digital television channels. We are pleased that the Commission recognises that these investments should be taken into account in its review.

“Through active participation in pioneering initiatives such as the Digital Video Broadcasting Project’s Portable Content Format, DIF members are working with other stakeholders to maximise access to interactive services on the widest possible choice of platforms and devices. DIF looks forward to demonstrating industry’s commitment to greater interoperability as we participate fully in the review process.”

End

Background

1. In March 2002 the EU adopted Directive 2002/21/EC on “A Common Regulatory Framework for Electronic Communications Networks and Services” (the Framework Directive). The purpose of the Framework Directive (which is one of a complementary package of five) is to provide a single, harmonised regulatory framework for the telecommunications, media and IT sectors.
2. The Directive also states that the Commission must review by July 2004 whether interoperability and freedom of choice for users have been adequately achieved in EU Member States.
3. The text issued by the Commission today represents the first step in this consultation process to assess progress towards interoperability.

About the Digital Interoperability Forum

The Digital Interoperability Forum (DIF) was created in November 2003 to promote industry-led solutions that make digital and interactive television services available on the widest choice of platforms and devices. DIF represents nineteen companies from Europe’s world leading digital television industry, including some of the foremost players in the delivery of digital and interactive television through European satellite, cable and digital terrestrial platforms: Advanced Digital Broadcast, BSkyB, CANAL+, Espial, Flextech, Liberate, Microsoft TV, Nagravision, NDS, ntl, Numéricable, OpenTV, Pace Micro Technology, Sky Italia, Telewest, TF1, TPS, UPC/Chello Media and ZetaCast.