

## **POSTE ITALIANE AND VODAFONE ITALIA TO LAUNCH VIRTUAL MOBILE OPERATOR BY YEAR END**

POSTE ITALIANE TO OPERATE WITH OWN SERVICES, PRICES AND INDEPENDENT CUSTOMER MANAGEMENT. VODAFONE TO MAKE NETWORK INFRASTRUCTURE AVAILABLE

GUINDANI: "ITALY ALSO JOINS EUROPE IN OPENING UP TO VIRTUAL OPERATORS"

SARMI: "A REAL SERVICE REVOLUTION FOR CUSTOMERS"

*5 April 2007.* **Poste Italiane** and **Vodafone Italia** have signed an agreement preparing the way for the launch a virtual mobile operator on the Italian market. Vodafone will make its network infrastructure available to Poste Italiane, enabling it to be the world's first postal services group to operate in the mobile telephony sector.

Vodafone Italia provide Poste Italiane with access to a full range of services, from voice to SMS, from roaming to data transmission. Moreover, Vodafone has created the platform that will integrate the systems used by the two companies, while the full and independent management of customers will be in the hands of Poste Italiane.

The service, which is due to be up and running by year end, will be entirely managed by Poste Italiane, with its strong, widespread customer base and extensive presence throughout Italy thanks to its 14,000 post offices, over 40,000 counters and its website and call centre, soon to be joined by mobile services.

In its new capacity as a mobile operator, Poste Italiane will use its own brand and will have an exclusive relationship with its customers. It will have a dedicated mobile code, and will manage all its own marketing and customer care activities. Poste Italiane will select the services that it intends to offer on the basis of totally independent processes and decisions and will set its prices autonomously.

In addition to voice and text, it will be possible for customers to use their cell phone to pay their bills, send telegrams, letters and registered mail, pay for transport services such as taxis, buses and trains, send postcards created from an MMS and follow whatever they have sent using the mail tracking service.

The entry of virtual mobile operators into the Italian market, scheduled for 2011 at the time the 3G frequency auction was held, will thus take place earlier than expected. This is due to the action taken by the Antitrust Authority and to

Vodafone's commitment to rapidly open up the wholesale market for mobile network access. The opening of the sector was also hastened by the Communications Authority's investigation of the access market.

"Mobile telecommunications have entered a new period of openness and competition," said Pietro Guindani, CEO of Vodafone Italia. "Poste Italiane, Italy's largest services group boasting a widespread presence throughout the country and a great capacity for service innovation, is the ideal partner for the development of a virtual mobile operator. The Italian mobile market is already extremely competitive. Poste Italiane's entry means it will be even more so. Our country has now joined the rest of Europe's advanced economies in opening up to virtual operators, a development that will benefit customers more than anyone else".

"In its new role as a virtual mobile operator," added Poste Group CEO, Massimo Sarmi, "our company will be able to revolutionise its traditional offering, providing a variety of brand new, highly attractive mobile services, offering ease of access and the maximum transparency. Two values that are close to Poste Italiane's heart and which the company will now apply to its new venture in the communications field. For these reasons," concluded Sarmi, "Poste Italiane has found the right partner in Vodafone, in view of its global leadership and our shared desire to offer innovation and quality".