



OMNITEL: OMNITEL AND COBAT PROMOTE THE COLLECTION OF USED BATTERIES SPONSORED BY LEGAMBIENTE FROM 1° DECEMBER DISCOUNTS IN ALL "SPAZIO OMNITEL" STORES FOR CUSTOMERS BRINGING IN OLD BATTERIES.

Rome, 15 November 2000 - From 1° December SPAZIO OMNITEL stores in 95 Italian cities will provide customers with special containers for the correct disposal of old mobile phone batteries. OMNITEL has undertaken this initiative in cooperation with COBAT (Consorzio Obbligatorio Batterie al piombo esauste e rifiuti piombosi), [Mandatory Consortium for the collection of used lead batteries and lead waste], who will arrange for the collection and correct disposal of the batteries, sponsored by LEGAMBIENTE.

An agreement between OMNITEL and COBAT was signed this morning by Vittorio Colao, Chief Executive Officer of OMNITEL and Fabio Ciampoli, General Manager COBAT, at the Ministry of the Environment, in the presence of the Minister, Wilder Boron and Mr Ermete Realacci, President of LEGAMBIENTE.

The joint initiative between OMNITEL and COBAT is one of the results of the framework agreement contained in the partnership accord signed by OMNITEL and LEGAMBIENTE, that sets out to provide a concrete solution to a problem that is increasing in proportion to the growth of the mobile telephone market and which calls for tough measures.

Thus for one year from 1 December in the 136 "Spazio Omnitel" stores in 95 Italian cities, containers will be provided for the collection of used mobile phone batteries. In order to encourage not only Omnitel customers but also all citizens to deposit their old batteries with them, the stores are offering a 20% discount on the purchase of a new battery of any type and manufacturer, even if different from the old battery. The promotion will commence on 1 December, to coincide with the launch of the entire venture and will end on 28 February 2001.

The companies and the associations involved in the project intend to adopt a proper solution for the collection and correct disposal of spent batteries. This will be in line with the overall strategies implemented for the separate collection of solid waste in order to enable it to be recycled or appropriately disposed of. In recent years there has been an enormous growth in the mobile telephone market, which has, in its turn, produced a potential figure of some tens of millions of individual spent batteries. There are now about 40 million mobile phones in use, reaching around 70% of the population.

"The creativity and a company's ability to innovate is also expressed through precautionary attitudes that identify a problem and anticipate its solution - said Vittorio Colao, Chief Executive Officer of Omnitel - The operations commencing today are the direct result of an approach to the question of respecting and safeguarding the environment, and one to which we have always paid great

attention in all our various operations".

"By cooperating with Omnitel for the recovery of nickel - cadmium batteries - said Fabio Ciampoli, General Manager of COBAT - we aim to show that we are fully committed to recycling toxic waste. Our hope is that this kind of initiative will encourage citizens to accept their responsibilities and respect the environment in which they live".

"In Italy there are almost 40 million mobile phones and at least the same number of batteries in circulation," said Ermete Realacci, the national president of Legambiente. "This is a phenomenon that besides having significantly changed Italian habits, has had a big impact upon the environment. The facts show that in 1999 alone 966 tons of batteries were "thrown away" and that this figure is expected to rise to 2250 tons in 2010. This enormous volume of waste containing such chemical elements as nickel, cadmium and cobalt and rare-earth elements would cause serious damage to the surrounding environment, and first and foremost pollute the soil and the ground water if they were directly discharged in a landfill. The primary objective is, therefore, to implement the correct disposal of the largest number possible of spent batteries. Therefore, such spontaneous initiatives as those proposed today are very welcome, especially in view of the fact that their main aim is to create an awareness among consumers of the need to safeguard the environment."

The battery collection operation will be supported by a poster campaign undertaken by the Omnitel McCann Erickson agency, to make citizens aware of the question of respect for the environment and its protection, including the use of mobile phones.