

Brussels, 3 June 2003

The European Commission funds Latin American Research Networking

Within the framework of the @LIS programme, the European Commission signed today a €12.5 million contract with the non-profit organisation DANTE (Delivery of Advanced Network Technology to Europe) for the creation of a Latin American intra-regional research networking infrastructure and its interconnection to the pan-European research network, GÉANT. The European Commission will finance 80% of the project, the remaining 20% coming from contributions made by the Latin American partners.

The project ALICE (America Latina Interconectada Con Europa) puts into practice the declaration made during the last EU-LAC Summit held in Madrid in June 2002, where Heads of State and Government of both regions agreed that "scientific research and technical development are fundamental elements in our relations and are an essential condition for the successful insertion of countries into a globalised world. It is convenient to share knowledge, technology and information, taking advantage of the connectivity of infrastructure and to encourage all peoples to gain universal access". This constitutes a step towards a broader co-operation for the development of a World Wide Research and Education Network, as proposed in the Commission Communication⁽¹⁾ on the UN World Summit on Information Society, to be held in December 2003 in Geneva.

Erkki Liikanen, European Commissioner for Enterprise and the Information Society said: "This project will provide huge improvements in infrastructure, which are of benefit to everyone concerned. For the first time, Latin American countries will have the high-speed Internet connections necessary for effective research collaboration amongst themselves, as well high-speed connectivity to researchers based in Europe."

ALICE represents a significant move towards the development of a research networking infrastructure across Latin America and with Europe. The initiative will accelerate the development of the Information Society in Latin America, providing an advanced data communications infrastructure to allow Latin American researchers to collaborate more easily in advanced international research projects. By overcoming the current limitations of international research collaboration within Latin America and towards Europe, the objective is to foster research and education partnership and advancement within and between both regions.

An international and open tender for the connectivity will be launched by DANTE imminently. As a result, the new research networking infrastructure bridging the European Union and Latin America is expected to be operational by the beginning of 2004.

The ALICE project will last until April 2006, after which time the Latin American Co-operation of Advanced Networks, CLARA, will ensure the

sustainability of the intra-regional Latin American research network and its direct continuous connection to GÉANT.

ALICE will be coordinated by DANTE and partnered by the National Research and Education Networks (NRENs) of the 18 Latin American @LIS beneficiary countries and of 4 European countries. ALICE will also be partnered by CLARA, the Latin American Co-operation of Advanced Networks, DANTE's counterpart organisation in the region. Two European Commission services have worked together to make this contract possible: the EuropeAid Co-operation Office and the Directorate General for Information Society

Project partners are:

DANTE	Coordinating Partner, UK	http://www.dante.net
CLARA		
RETINA	Argentina	http://www.retina.ar
BolNet	Bolivia	http://www.bolnet.bo
RNP	Brazil	http://www.rnp.br
REUNA	Chile	http://www.reuna.cl
Univ. De Cauca	Colombia	
Crnet	Costa Rica	http://www.crnet.cr
RedUniv	Cuba	
FUNDACyT	Ecuador	http://www.reicyt.org.ec
RAICES	El Salvador	http://www.raices.org.sv
RAGIE	Guatemala	http://www.ragie.org.gt
UNITEC	Honduras	http://www.unitec.edu
CUDI	Mexico	http://www.cudi.edu.mx
	Nicaragua	
RedCyT	Panama	http://www.redcyt.org.pa
ARANDU	Paraguay	
RAP	Peru	http://www.rap.org.pe
RAU	Uruguay	http://www.rau.edu.uy
REACCIUN	Venezuela	http://www.reacciun.ve
RENATER	France	http://www.renater.fr
GARR	Italy	http://www.garr.it
FCCN	Portugal	http://www.fccn.pt
RedIRIS	Spain	http://www.rediris.es

About @LIS

@LIS, Alliance for the Information Society, is a cooperation programme with Latin America aiming to promote the information society and fight the digital divide throughout Latin America. Adopted in 2001, the @LIS programme has a budget of €77.5 millions of which €63.5 millions will be financed by the

European Commission. @LIS covers a wide spectrum of objectives aiming at creating a long-term partnership between the two regions in the field of the Information Society. It focuses on the following activities: a dialogue on policy and regulatory aspects, the development of standards, the implementation of demonstration projects in favour of the civil society, a network of regulators and the interconnection of research centers. Further information at:

<http://europa.eu.int/alisis>

About DANTE:

DANTE, a Cambridge, England-based organisation set up to build and manage advanced network services for the European Research and Education community, is the coordinating partner of the GÉANT consortium and responsible for the construction of GÉANT. GÉANT, the pan-European multi-gigabit research network, enables European scientists to compete on an international stage by providing them with a world-class backbone that offers the bandwidth and the Quality of Service required for research and development activities at this level. It represents the basis for the introduction of "virtual laboratories" and "virtual institutes" in Europe. GÉANT is a project co-funded by the DG Information Society of the European Commission.

Further information at :

http://www.cordis.lu/ist/rn/geant_ext.htm

http://www.cordis.lu/ist/rn/europ_backbone.htm

<http://www.dante.net/geant>

(1) COM(2003) 271 final Communication from the European Commission « Towards A Global Partnership in The Information Society: EU Perspective In The Context Of The United Nations World Summit On the Information Society (WSIS)