PETER LILLEY WELCOMES COOPERATION BETWEEN PCN OPERATORS

Trade and Industry Secretary Peter Lilley today welcomed the decision of the three licensed operators to work together to develop the new Personal Communication Networks (PCN) system.

The operators today announced a joint agreement in which they say they will cooperate in developing a common technical framework for PCN services in the UK and Europe.

They hope the agreement will form the basis of an international Memorandum of Understanding for European PCN operators.

The agreement has been signed by the three operators granted a license to develop PCN's in the UK; Mercury PCN Limited, Microtel Communications Limited and Unite 1. Other countries' operators will be invited to sign up to it.

Welcoming the agreement, Mr Lilley said:

"PCN's are the telecommunications innovation of the nineties. Their successful development is central to maintaining the growth which UK industry has enjoyed as a result of the Government's policies of liberalisation and competition.

"I am therefore pleased to see the three operator's commitment to the future of PCN's. I applaud their efforts in developing a wholly compatible telecommunications service for introduction as soon as possible.

"It is also encouraging to see how they have already jointly played an active role with the European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI) in the development of DCS 1800 - the new standard for the service. This agreement signals their intention to maintain the leading position in the development of PCN's throughout Europe."

Signatories to the agreement will be expected to work towards providing a framework which ensures the commercial operation of PCN's in the UK from 1992. They will be expected to support the development of DCS 1800 and the provision of a common set of channels within the frequency band 1710 - 1880 MHz to allow roaming on an international basis.

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. In December 1989 the then Trade and Industry Minister Eric Forth awarded licences to develop and operate PCN's in the UK to Mercury Personal Communications Network, Microtel Communications and Unitel Personal Communications. Each operator agreed to commit to a common technical standard for the development of PCN (DTI Press Notice 89/826).

2. Earlier this year it was decided to adopt GSM, the standard under development for the proposed 900 MHz Pan European Digital Cellular System, as the basis for the development of a standard for PCN. Since then, PCN operators have been working with ETSI to adapt GSM for the higher frequencies at which PCN will operate and for other specific requirements. The new standard for PCN services is known as DCS 1800.

3. PCN services are expected to begin during 1992. For further information on individual operators contact:

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