

## THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN OPEN FIBER AND TELESPAZIO IS READY TO GO SATELLITE CONNECTIONS IN ITALY'S MOST REMOTE LOCATIONS

*The contract between the two companies is now operational to bring broadband, smart working and distance learning to isolated homes, mountain cabins, small islands and inaccessible areas that other types of connections do not currently reach*

**Rome, 28 January 2021** - Open Fiber has signed a contract with Telespazio - the joint venture between Leonardo (67%) and Thales (33%) that is a European leader in satellite solutions and services - to use space technology for bringing broadband connectivity even to the most remote and isolated locations throughout Italy.

The goal of the partnership between the Leonardo subsidiary and Open Fiber is to help close the country's *digital divide* and promote its digitalisation by providing Internet access to a wider catchment of users. This will be achieved using a technology - via satellite - that is now capable of offering broadband services (*HTS - High Throughput Satellite*) with a level of performance fully comparable to that of terrestrial services. Even isolated homes, small islands and inaccessible areas will be able to enjoy digital services such as online streaming, smart working, and distance learning platforms.

*"This technological solution - states **Elisabetta Ripa**, CEO of Open Fiber - enables us to take our network everywhere: through our already operational agreement with Telespazio we are extending our array of services to the most inaccessible locations across the country, in addition to our plans for FTTH and FWA fibre coverage. STTH - connection via satellite - will not replace these technologies, but will provide an alternative means to cable places that would otherwise remain without connectivity. The partnership will enable us to enrich our ultra-broadband network, which already reaches over 11 million homes. Using what has emerged as a winning business model we aim to close the Italian digital divide, the result of decades of low investment in the sector, by making the best available technologies available to our service provider customers".*

**Luigi Pasquali**, Coordinator of Leonardo's space activities and CEO of Telespazio, says: *"The satellite technology offered by Telespazio is the complementary solution that was previously missing, one that will enable our nation to achieve its strategic objectives for ultra-broadband coverage. We're proud to be able to make it available to Open Fiber and therefore to all commercial operators, thus guaranteeing access to digital connectivity services within a rapid and certain timescale. This initiative is part of a broader project by Leonardo to achieve territorial cohesion, aiming to reduce the connectivity gap by ensuring full digital citizenship for millions of Italians. This is all taking place within the context of our long-term vision as set out in the Be Tomorrow – Leonardo 2030 strategic plan".*

Under the agreement, Open Fiber will acquire the STTH (Satellite To The Home) Internet access service from Telespazio. A continuous signal will be transmitted via satellite link and received by a compact antenna installed and configured at the customer's home. Telespazio ensures that Open Fiber has the best technologies currently available with performance based on HTS satellites. Moreover, the agreement will allow Open Fiber to access even higher levels

of performance with the forthcoming VHTS satellites (Very High Throughput Satellite), in response to market changes and customer requirements.

This service will complete Open Fiber's range of services beyond FTTH (Fiber To The Home) and, to a lesser extent, FWA (Fixed Wireless Access), and will be able to be activated through the company's partner providers. It will also be used to ensure coverage to some of the so-called 'ultra-white areas', i.e. those without either fixed or mobile connectivity, with Open Fiber launching a specifically developed plan in approximately 200 local authority areas at the instigation of the Ministry of Innovation.

The aims of this agreement are in-line with Open Fiber's mission of building a nationwide ultra-broadband network (UBB) that also includes the most isolated areas. Along with its project for black areas and the #BUL plan for white areas, the company led by Elisabetta Ripa has recently launched a new special project aimed at guaranteeing adequate network coverage in local authority areas that Agcom defines as "ultra-white" - i.e. those with the greatest connectivity issues. Many areas identified as having "no internet" have a long history of infrastructural deficiencies, and this agreement will make it possible for even the most cable-unfriendly addresses to be reached using alternative technological solutions.

### **About Open Fiber**

*Open Fiber was founded to build a nationwide ultra-broadband network infrastructure through fibre optics (FTTH). Its aim is to ensure coverage of the main Italian cities and rural areas through a 1 Gbps FTTH (Fiber To The Home) network, supplying the public, businesses and public administration bodies with increasingly advanced services and functionality. Open Fiber is a wholesale-only provider. It does not sell fibre-optic services directly to end customers but makes its infrastructure available on the same terms to all interested providers. With more than 11 million broadband households already cabled, Open Fiber is Europe's third-largest provider of FTTH (Fiber To The Home) connectivity and its largest wholesale-only operator.*

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### **About Telespazio**

*Telespazio, a joint venture between Leonardo (67%) and Thales (33%), is one of the world's main operators in the space services sector. These include the design and development of space systems, the management of satellite launch and in-orbit control services, Earth observation services, integrated communications, satellite navigation and localisation, and scientific programmes. Telespazio plays a leading role in its relevant markets by leveraging the technological expertise it has acquired through 60 years of activity, through developing its own infrastructures, and through its participation in space programmes such as Galileo, EGNOS, Copernicus and COSMO-SkyMed. In 2019 Telespazio generated a turnover of €535 million, with a workforce of around 2,600 employees across eight countries.*

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