



TELECOMMUNICATIONS REGULATORY AUTHORITY ISSUES INTERIM INTERCONNECTION ORDER

MANAMA – 15 March 2004 – The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) announced today that at midnight on 15 March, that the Authority issued Batelco and MTC Vodafone Bahrain with a temporary interconnection order that sets the terms under which the networks of the two operators will continue to connect so that consumers from one network can still contact consumers connected to the other network.

The issuance of this order comes following the expiration of the interim interconnection order issued by the Authority on 15 December 2003, at the request of the operators themselves. The interim order, which provided the parties with a three-month period in which to independently reach agreement, expired after their inability to effectively reach consensus.

The terms and conditions of the newly issued preliminary interconnection order remain virtually unchanged from those previously established by the TRA and will be reviewed by the Authority on a monthly basis, at which time all pertinent information received from the operators will be taken into account.

This order is relative for a period of three months , unless terminated beforehand by the Authority.

According to A. Andreas Avgousti, General Director of the TRA:

“It is with regret that the Authority moves to issue this preliminary interconnection order. While the Authority stands ready, at all times, to do what is necessary to protect the interests of consumers and ensure the process of liberalisation proceeds in a smooth and effective manner, it expects market operators to work together in good faith to reach consensus on crucial matters – such as interconnection – that impact the public and the industry. It is the hope that, going forward, market operators can independently conclude such commercial agreements, without the need for intervention on the part of the Regulator.”

About the TRA

The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) was established by Legislative Decree No. 48 promulgating the Telecommunications Law. The TRA is an independent body and its duties and powers include, among other things, protecting the interests of subscribers and users and promoting effective and fair competition among existing and new licensed operators.