



**Telecommunications Fact Finding Mission in Bahrain
on 15th and 16th January 2005
TRA Development Review Panel meetings scheduled.**

Manama- 4 January 2005 - In preparation for the *first annual* Telecommunications Regulatory Authority Development Review Panel to be held on 30th January 2005, a distinguished panel of international experts will arrive in Bahrain on 15th January 2005 for a two day fact finding mission.

The purpose of the visit is to meet with interested parties, collect necessary information and thus assess the progress to date of the TRA, the effectiveness of its processes and the development of a fair and transparent telecommunications regime in the Kingdom.

The panel consists of independent experts, who have all built up enviable reputations in the industry, both for their experience and integrity. They are:-

Professor Martin Cave, Director of the Centre for Management Under Regulation, Warwick Business School in the United Kingdom, who specialises in Regulatory Economics, particularly the communications sector; Mr. Christopher Wright, a Special Advisor on Regulated Industries at the lawyers Slaughter & May also from the United Kingdom, and Mr. Ian Martin, a banker and Senior Telecommunications Analyst at ABN Amro Bank from Australia.

On the 15th and 16th January 2005, at the Gulf Hotel, Bahrain, the panel will conduct a series of private meetings on a non-attributable basis at which the TRA will not be present. Invitations to schedule meetings with the Panel have already been sent out to members of the telecoms industry, relevant official bodies, and current and prospective licensees including unsuccessful applicants for the Second Mobile Licence granted by TRA in 2003.

As part of their fact finding mission, the Panel also wish to meet with other interested parties with a contribution to make to the telecommunications industry.

Following the visit, the Panel will assess the results of their findings and present them at a public meeting to be held on January 30th 2005, at the Ritz Carlton, Bahrain, where they will advise the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) on areas needing improvement and anticipated trends.

Mr. Andreas Avgousti, General Director of the TRA, states "The TRA has worked tirelessly since its inception to create a culture of openness and fair and transparent competition within the telecommunications market in Bahrain, but it is not enough to be transparent, we must also be seen to be transparent. We have set up this panel and through their fact finding mission we want to make sure that they have the opportunity to gather all the information they need and hear the views of all interested parties in a manner that is not influenced by the TRA. What we want to obtain is feedback from the Panel to improve ourselves even further. With this in mind we would like to thank everyone who will be meeting with them as it is only through their involvement that we can make this process really useful for the TRA and by implication for the industry and the Kingdom as a whole".

Any parties wishing to meet with members of the Panel during their visit to Bahrain, can seek to schedule a meeting on either the 15th or 16th January, by visiting the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) website at www.tra.org.bh or by calling (+973) 17402624, or sending a request via fax to (+973) 17401513 or email nynke@batelco.com.bh, no later than 10th January 2005.

Notes to Editors :

1. About the TRA

The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) was established by Legislative Decree No. 48 of 2002 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. More information regarding the TRA can be viewed at www.tra.org.bh

2. The Panel Members

Martin Cave

Martin Cave is Professor and Director of the Centre for Management under Regulation, Warwick Business School. Until 2001 he was Professor of Economics at Brunel University. He specialises in regulatory

economics, especially of the communications sector. He has advised a number of Regulatory Agencies in Telecommunications and Broadcasting. As well as his academic work he has also undertaken studies for the European Commission and advised regulatory agencies. He was a member of the UK Competition Commission from 1996 to 2002. He is the author of the *Independent Review of Spectrum Management* (2002) for the UK Government, co-author of *Understanding Regulation* (1999) and co-editor of the *Handbook of Telecommunications Economics Vol. 1* (2002) and *Vol. 2* (2005)

Christopher Wright

Christopher is Special Adviser – Regulated Industries in the competition and regulation group at Slaughter and May. His previous career was spent in the UK Government, initially on the restructuring, corporatisation and privatisation of publicly owned industries, notably in the energy sector. This led naturally to work on market liberalisation and economic regulation, including the design and implementation of new legislative frameworks and regulatory regimes. He was responsible for key elements of the restructuring and privatisation of the electricity industry, including the introduction of competition, the drafting of the legislation and licences, the establishment of the regulator and the flotation arrangements.

Christopher subsequently spent some time as the Know-How Fund's resident adviser in Hungary, working on the reform of the oil and gas industries. He was then Assistant Director of Competition Policy at the Office of Fair Trading and Director of Competition and Licence Enforcement at Oftel, the telecoms regulator.

Since joining Slaughter and May, Christopher has advised many public and private sector organisations, principally in the fields of communications, energy and transport on incorporations, restructurings and mergers and acquisitions under the UK and EC merger control regimes. He has also advised various clients on their regulatory strategy, and on business-critical regulatory initiatives (such as access, price control and business separation). Finally, he has recently advised the UK Government on a complex public-private partnership and two overseas regulators on the implementation of new licensing regimes.

Ian Martin

Ian Martin has over 20 years experience in infrastructure economics, telecommunications policy and research. He spent 10 years (1984-1994) with the Australian Department of Transport and Communications, including research and policy advice on Universal Service Obligations (USOs), telecommunications competition and regulation. During this period he helped develop price controls for Telstra including retail price caps and price rules for network access.

In 1992-93 Ian undertook a research exchange with Oftel, the then UK telecommunications regulator, and the Federal Communications Commission, the US communications regulator, where he worked on price controls and other telecommunications regulatory issues.

Since 1994 Ian has worked as a telecommunications research analyst in the global investment markets with BZW, Macquarie Bank and ABN Amro. In 1997 he was the independent analyst in BZW's role advising the Australian Government on the Telstra privatisation. In 1999 he was the head telecommunications analyst with ABN Amro, which held the lead investment-banking role in the sale of Telstra 2.

Ian was the head of ABN Amro's alternative network providers European research team based in London in 2000-2001 before leaving to become senior telecommunications strategist at Macquarie Bank. He is now back at ABN Amro helping to rebuild its Australian research team ahead of the forthcoming sale of Telstra 3.