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5 May 1995

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DANTE awards EuropaNET continuation contract to BT

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Following completion of a public invitation to tender British Telecom has been awarded a contract to provide the continuation of the current EuropaNET service. EuropaNET is the pan-European network that interconnects the academic and research networks in Europe and connects them to the global Internet. EuropaNET represents a major part of the Internet in Europe. The network is managed by DANTE, a company set up in 1993 by the national research networks in Europe.

Under the contract the pan-European backbone will be outsourced to BT, which includes backbone planning (in cooperation with DANTE) and implementation, the provision of switching equipment, circuits, and help desk facilities. The new contract provides for an IP (Internet Protocol) service at access speeds up to 8 Mbps.

The network will be open to commercial user organisations. DANTE and BT will sign an agreement under which commercial usage is handled by BT to the mutual benefit of DANTE's customers and BT.

The next step will be to establish a network based on 34 Mbps lines.

As these are not available yet and there was no guarantee they would be by the time the current EMPB contract expires (October 1995) an arrangement for a continuation of EuropaNET was mandatory.

Dai Davies, general manager of DANTE said: "The new contract gives us the space we need to prepare for the implementation of the first 34 Mbps connections. The choice for BT is based on solid technical and commercial grounds. It was a close finish but we are convinced this outcome is in the best interest of our customers. Strong points in the BT offer were their advanced plans for a Europe-wide IP service

as well as their global reach via their link up with MCI."

DANTE will use the coming months to prepare for a smooth transition to ensure that EuropaNET customers will enjoy an uninterrupted high quality service.