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Embassy tour boosts British satellite launch

Company Name: Avanti Communications

Avanti Communications, the UK's only fixed satellite operator, and one of only eight in Europe, has used a tour of British Embassies to help launch its first Europe-wide satellite.

HYLAS (Highly Adaptable Satellite) One, developed with the support of the European Space Agency (ESA) and the British National Space Centre (BNSC), is set to revolutionise the European broadband market.



The satellite, located at longitude 33.5°W, is up to three times more powerful than any other satellite over Europe. It breaks new ground, operating on a powerful "Ka Band" frequency that permits a smaller domestic aerial, giving it access to customers in previously "out-of-reach" areas. The satellite's "flexible payload" also allows it to be cost-effectively fine-tuned in space, to suit its market.

It was Avanti CEO David Williams, a former banking and telecoms financing expert, who initially spotted the gap in the European satellite market, where 24 million homes remain out of reach of terrestrial broadband. Anticipating the launch of HYLAS One in 2009, he approached UK Trade & Investment (UKTI) London for advice on expanding the business, seeking support for a series of events to boost HYLAS One's launch in the €300 billion European telecoms industry market, following Avanti's initial investment of £82million in the European market.

From David's initial brief, UKTI London International Trade Adviser Ian Paterson suggested a series of Overseas Market Introduction Service (OMIS) receptions at British embassies across Europe. Following a high-profile London launch at the House of Commons, events were held in ten countries: Poland (Warsaw), Serbia (Belgrade), Ireland (Dublin), the Czech Republic (Prague), Portugal (Lisbon), Spain (Madrid), Italy (Rome), Austria (Vienna) and Hungary (Budapest), at a total cost of £21,000. The company has subsequently used UKTI's Tradeshows Access Programme to reach these markets via trade shows such as the 2008 IBC Conference in Amsterdam.

The visits have provided high-quality leads from national telecommunications companies, mobile companies, ISPs, classic satellite resellers and government departments. Italy and Austria and Portugal have proved particularly fruitful territories. The visits have also been an eye-opener in high-growth markets.

It was great to have a UK contact, Ian Paterson, who knows everyone and could guide us as to the relationships we were planning. Ian provided contact

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Serbia, for example, is showing 6% growth per year, with ample scope for inward investment. One of the guests at the reception in Belgrade said the event was the best gathering of the leaders of the Serbian ICT industry he had ever attended. Avanti has also identified €1.8 billion of EU funding from Structural Funds for rural broadband roll-out across Europe.

information, introductions and made contact with people after the events.

Avanti CEO David Williams

A second satellite is planned at 33°E, to cover the Middle East, as Avanti owns satellite licences covering the Middle East, Africa, India, Russia, Central Asia, China, South East Asia and Latin America. With the encouragement of their European tour behind them, it is likely that the company will use UKTI's Middle East network for similar receptions when they launch their satellite over that region.

David Williams said: "The provision of broadband across Europe is vital and fundamentally aids the process of regeneration and communication across all areas, even those that are remote and appear inaccessible. Avanti is uniquely placed to play a leading role in this process, and the launch of HYLAS One will enable us to provide affordable broadband access to those previously thought to be unable to receive it.

"It was great to have a UK contact, Ian Paterson, who knows everyone and could guide us as to the relationships we were planning. Ian provided contact information, introductions and made contact with people after the events. He also raised issues that needed sorting out. The in-market OMIS service also fleshed out our initial research, as second-hand research can never be as good as having someone there in the country".

UKTI Chief Executive Sir Andrew Cahn said: "UK-based firms hold nearly 25% of the €10 billion annual world market for broadcast and media technology. Without the expertise of companies like Avanti Communications, and the leading development role they take, the worldwide broadcast and communications industry would look very different."

For more information, contact penelopeparkin@uktilondon.org.uk or visit the company's website at www.avanti-communications.com.

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