

Cooperation for the development of broadband access in rural areas of Croatia

Ericsson Nikola Tesla and RUNE Crow company signed a contract for the implementation of broadband optical network access in rural areas in Istria County and Primorje-Gorski Kotar County.

Rural Network Project (RUNE) is the first and currently the only international project at the European level which connects the territory of several member countries by a unique cross-border optical network. With the construction of the network in rural areas which are currently not covered by optical infrastructure and where the existing Internet service providers have no commercial interest, RUNE will help local authorities to achieve the goals of Digital Agenda for Europe 2020. Moreover, this will contribute to the liberalization of the electronic communication service market. In the end, this guarantees all operators an equal approach to end users under equal conditions. This project is financed by Connecting Europe Broadband Fund (CEBF), as the first investment platform for the support of broadband infrastructure within the European Fund for Strategic Investment (EFSI).

Goran Ožbolt, Director of Sales and Marketing for Alternative Operators, Ericsson Nikola Tesla, expressed his satisfaction with the contract: "This project has outstanding importance for expanding the broadband access in rural areas as a foundation for their development since there is a clear correlation between access to broadband infrastructure and GDP growth. Selecting Ericsson Nikola Tesla as a partner in the realization of this unique pioneering project represents not only a great acknowledgment for us, but also an obligation to justify the given trust by a proactive approach, service quality and professionalism."

Goran Živec, the founder of RUNE project, said: "A great task lies ahead of us and therefore we choose the best partners for its realization. I would like to thank all local communities and other shareholders who placed their trust in us to implement the broadband optical network in rural areas in Istria County and Primorje-Gorski Kotar County using an alternative approach."

Saša Ukić, member of the RUNE Crow Management Board, said: "I would like to highlight the importance of the beginning of investment in building broadband infrastructure by the FTTH model in rural areas. Cooperation with Ericsson Nikola Tesla on the RUNE project provides additional confirmation of seriousness as well as assurance that the important part of the work will be in the hands of those who will contribute to the successful implementation of the project with their experience and knowledge. I am excited that through cooperation with experts from Ericsson Nikola Tesla we will gain new and invaluable experience which will help us in other similar projects."

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Ericsson enables communications service providers to capture the full value of connectivity. The company's portfolio spans Networks, Digital Services, Managed Services, and Emerging Business and is designed to help our customers go digital, increase efficiency and find new revenue streams. Ericsson's investments in innovation have delivered the benefits of telephony and mobile broadband to billions of people around the world. The Ericsson stock is listed on Nasdaq Stockholm and on NASDAQ New York.

Ericsson Nikola Tesla is an associated company of the Ericsson Group which leads and supports modern communications. The company's activities include marketing and sales, research and development, design of the total communications solution, services in the multi-service and mobile networks area including the mobile Internet and complex system integration in all business areas. The company provides innovative ICT solutions that constantly improve people's life and create new value. Shares of Ericsson Nikola Tesla are traded in the Regular Market of the Zagreb Stock Exchange under the stock exchange symbol ERNT-R-A.

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