



## Press Release

# ALICE Project Develops First Latin American Research & Education network

**EU-funded ALICE initiative to launch Latin America's first regional research network, including direct connection to pan-European GÉANT network**

**Cambridge, UK, 26 May 2004** – The ALICE project, “America Latina Interconectada Con Europa”, is soon to roll out a new Latin American backbone network and a direct trans-Atlantic link between Latin America and Europe for the benefit of the research and education communities in Latin America and Europe.

From 1 August 2004, and for the first time ever, the ground-breaking new network will provide direct connectivity of 155 Mbps, in a “ring” topology, linking the NRENs (National Research and Education Networks) of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Panama and Mexico. This new Latin American ring will be connected at 622 Mbps to the European research network GÉANT in Madrid, Spain. In addition, the Venezuelan NREN will be connected to the ring via a 45Mbps circuit between Caracas and Sao Paulo.

Further connections linking the NRENs of Uruguay and Paraguay to the ring will follow soon afterwards.

The new connections will provide a Latin American research networking backbone enabling researchers in the region to collaborate directly for the first time in their work with one another and with their colleagues in European research projects. The new infrastructure will provide a significant boost to Latin American research by improving the data communication facilities available to researchers and supporting them in the global research race.

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Narrowing the digital divide in this way within Latin America and between Latin America and Europe contributes to the overall economic development of the region and also reduces intra-regional disparities. Contributing to social cohesion is one of the top priorities to be addressed at the third EU-LAC Summit of Heads of State and Government on 28<sup>th</sup> May in Guadalajara, Mexico.

ALICE is a project co-funded by the European Commission within the framework of its @LIS cooperation programme which aims at promoting the Information Society and fighting the digital divide throughout Latin America. The ALICE project has taken a structured and comprehensive approach to identifying the connectivity needs of the Latin American research community and is implementing an effective and efficient solution to meet these needs.

The network topology being implemented has resulted in part from a thorough feasibility study performed at the start of the project, which investigated research networking requirements and infrastructure availability. The circuits are being leased from infrastructure providers selected by a public procurement exercise carried out between June 2003 and April 2004 according to EC procurement procedures. A further product of the initiative has been CLARA, an international not-for-profit organisation set up with the aim of improving research networking and research collaboration across Latin America.

The ALICE project is co-ordinated by DANTE, which has ten years of experience in operating pan-European research and education networks such as GÉANT. DANTE General Manager Dai Davies said, "The ALICE project is an important initiative of the European Commission, which supports the transfer of the best practice European research networking model and adapts it to the local needs and conditions of Latin America. It is providing an important boost to research networking in the region and providing direct access to GÉANT for the first time. I expect the positive consequences of ALICE will appear quite rapidly in that Latin American research will create a far higher profile for itself on the world stage."

The first fruits of the ALICE project will shortly be seen in the successful connection of 6 Latin American national research and education networks, and it is expected the project's significant contribution to the region's development will continue with the addition soon afterwards of further connections benefitting other Latin American countries.

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### **About ALICE**

ALICE is providing dedicated research Internet connections between the research and educational communities of the Latin American region and towards Europe by connecting to GÉANT, the pan-European research and education network. The project is being funded until May 2006 with 10M Euros from the European Commission's @LIS cooperation programme, which aims to promote the Information Society in the region.

**- MORE "ABOUT" -**

The ALICE project is co-ordinated by DANTE and partnered by the National Research and Education Networks (NRENs) of the 18 Latin American @LIS beneficiary countries, as well as FCCN, GARR, RedIris and RENATER, the NRENs of Portugal, Italy, Spain and France respectively. ALICE is also partnered by CLARA, the Latin American Co-operation of Advanced Networks, DANTE's counterpart organisation in the region. 80% funding of the project comes from the European Commission's EuropeAid Co-operation Office. The remaining 20% will be contributed by the Latin American partners in ALICE.

Following a tender issued in June 2003, contracts are being awarded for the ALICE connectivity for service starting during summer 2004.

**About DANTE:**

DANTE's name derives from the acronym 'Delivery of Advanced Network Technology to Europe'. Owned by European NRENs (National Research and Education Networks), it is an organisation whose purpose is to plan, build and operate pan-European networks for research and education. Working in partnership with Europe's NRENs and in cooperation with the European Commission, DANTE has been fundamental to the success of European research and education networking over the last decade, providing the data communications infrastructure essential to the success of many research projects in Europe today.

**About CLARA:**

About CLARA:

CLARA, the Latin American Cooperation of Advanced Networks, is a not-for-profit association registered in Montevideo, Uruguay. Its aims are to develop and operate a Latin American research and education network interconnecting the region's national research and education networks, and to promote cooperation in research and education at the regional and global levels via the use of advanced data communications networks.

- MORE "ABOUT" -

**About GÉANT:**

Reaching over 3,500 research and education institutions in 32 European countries through its direct connection to 28 National and Regional Research and Education Networks (NRENs), and also offering high-speed international connectivity to other world regions, GÉANT provides the highest capacity and offers the greatest geographic coverage of any network of its kind in the world. Enabling researchers to compete on an international stage by providing them with a world-class backbone that offers the bandwidth and services required for research activities at this level, GÉANT has dual roles of providing an infrastructure to support research and education, as well as providing an infrastructure for research itself.

GÉANT is a project co-funded by the European Commission under the Fifth Research & Development Framework Programme. The project partners are 26 European NRENs, together with DANTE as the co-ordinating partner.

More information from:

<http://www.dante.net/alice>

<http://europa.eu.int/alis>

<http://www.alis-online.org/>

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