

# The stones are rolling ...



Summer is the cruellest of seasons. While the general wisdom is that nothing ever really happens during the Summer, the experience shows that things are slightly different. Take this year, for example. With people busy enjoying the sunshine (or the rain for the unlucky ones) all over the world, a spate of activity at corporate level could be seen taking place. Some of them were truly remarkable in terms of the size of the companies involved, but all of them, even the smaller ones, seemed to point to fact that something is really happening, and at a fast rate, in our industry: consolidation.

In July, PanAmSat signed an agreement with Alcatel of France for the acquisition of multiple European orbital slots as well as the Europe\*Star-1 satellite – soon renamed PAS-12. This was a highly strategic move: as a result of this transaction, PanAmSat substantially strengthens its presence in the European and Middle Eastern marketplaces as well as expand its global reach into key growth regions.

Then it came the news that two of the largest resellers of Inmarsat services, Stratos and Xantic, were merging to create the largest Mobile Satellite Service (MSS) provider in the world (see *Satellite Telephony*

article in this issue).

After satellite operators and service providers, it was time for some action in the Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT) sector. So when Singapore Technologies announced its intention to buy iDirect Technologies, the news came as no surprise here at Satellite Evolution Asia (see *Spot Beams* article in this issue). However, few people could retain their composure when news of global satellite giants Intelsat and PanAmSat broke out. At US\$3.2 billion, this is an announcement that is likely to remain in people's minds for quite some time (see *Global Operator* article in this issue).

So what is coming next? Is this the end of the story? That is unlikely. When a stone begins to roll, it picks up momentum. Just hours before going to press a news item hit our editorial desk: Eutelsat Communications has confirmed plans for an Initial Public Offering (IPO) on Euronext Paris and is expected to value the group at Euro 2.5 billion-3 billion. The decision to float the company is just the latest in a series of moves that have transformed the market for satellite services. Our advise on the matter? Fasten your seatbelt and expect more. ■

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Giovanni Verlini'.

**Giovanni Verlini**  
Managing Editor