

TELEFÓNICA LAUNCHES 'ABILITY SPAIN' AWARDS

- **Spanish Awards Mark First Stage of Global Expansion**

UN International Day of Persons with Disabilities, Brussels, 3 December 2008 – Telefónica today announced a major new initiative to highlight the contribution that people with disabilities make to the economy.

The Ability Awards, whose mission is to drive societal change by engaging leadership in the case for disability in business, are being launched in Spain next year by Telefónica after years of success in Ireland.

Examining all aspects of employment and customer service, the Awards not only recognise progressive attitudes and practices in organisations that see disability and diversity as a corporate asset and key to success, but also provide an environment for learning and continuous improvement. Most importantly the awards promote and identify role models that can be replicated.

“The Ability Awards are not just an awards scheme. They are also about bringing a voice to what remains as one of the last great invisible issues – the value of approximately 800 million people with disabilities in the world,” said Caroline Casey, CEO of the Kanchi organisation and founder of the Awards.

“Telefónica’s aim is to increase the participation of the disabled community in all aspects of society,” said César Alierta, Chairman of Telefónica. “Positive action is critical when you consider that 15 per cent of the EU population – or 50 million people – have a disability and those numbers will rise to 20 per cent by 2020.”

Alierta added: “The Awards further strengthens our commitment by celebrating organisations and business leaders that are successfully working with people with disabilities, rewarding professional excellence in this particular area of people-management.”

The Ability Awards – with sponsor Telefónica O2 Ireland – were launched in 2004 by the Aisling Foundation (now known as Kanchi), with the purpose of engaging business leadership around the disability business case. Ability Spain will be a pilot for an international model of the Ability Awards.

Ability Spain is the latest initiative from Telefónica Accesible, a world-wide project committed to promoting equal opportunities, non-discrimination and universal accessibility for disabled people and anyone at risk of social exclusion in general.

Telefónica Accesible works constantly to develop ongoing programmes and a wide range of products and services to meet the needs of the disabled. These include mobile phones specially designed for use by disabled people; voice-recognition technologies that turn voice

to text and vice versa; 'Mobile Speak' products for the blind and visually impaired, location-based 'bracelets' and other devices for people with orientation problems.

Specialist Telefónica Research and Development centres are also working on innovative new services such as web-based e-health (remote healthcare), digital home and speech technologies and other tele-support applications.

In addition, Telefónica's Foundation, the company's social action division, has established numerous initiatives to support people with disabilities including Retadis – a project to create a network of computers which are adapted for people with disabilities – and an employee volunteering programme which has already engaged with organisations such as CNSE, Fundación También, Special Olympics, ONG KupuKupu and AISIN.

In Spain, Telefónica's ATAM – an organisation which provides education and support for people with disabilities – runs programmes to embed disabled people into high-quality employment in the telecommunications, motoring and service industries. ATAM has already benefited 60,000 people and has received €14 million in contributions to date.

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Notes to Editors:

Telefónica Europe has developed a range of accessible products for disabled people. These include:

- Specially designed mobile phones for disabled people - Movistar 'Easiphone' [Fácil] available in Spain and Germany (through Tchibo).
- Location-based services 'Localízame' (424) - that currently has 180,000 users – allowing users to locate a person using a Movistar telephone.
- A specially-designed 'Columbra' bracelet for people with Alzheimers or with orientation problems. The Columbra bracelet is equipped with a GSM/GPRS module and a GPS, enabling location by satellite (GPS) or cellsite. In addition, the system has an alarm facility that sounds outside of fixed 'security zones'.
- Voicemail which turns an SMS into voice.
- SpinVox service which translates voice messages into text.
- 'Software Mobile Speak' for screen reading, incorporated in the Nokia N70 handset - a very useful application for people with visual impairments.
- Developments of new services for people with disabilities based on bi-dimensional codes. These enable hearing or visuals of any kind just by placing the mobile phone near specially placed information pods in bus-stops, museums, public buildings etc. These codes can also be used for payment of products and services, identification, etc.

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