

# *Cuba and U.S. Sign First Commercial Accord in Telecommunications*

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Havana, November 3 (RHC)-- Cuba's telecommunications company ETECSA and the Kansas-based SPRINT communications company signed a roaming service accord, the first direct commercial agreement between the two countries since they re-established diplomatic relations on July 20th.

In a statement released at Havana's International Trade Fair, where the accord was signed, the Cuban company said that the initiative will allow SPRINT clients to use their phones for calls and SMS messages from Cuba.

According to the information, the payment for these services will continue to use third country banks and a currency that cannot be the U.S. dollar due to the prohibitions imposed by the U.S. economic, commercial and financial blockade of Cuba.

ETECSA and SPRINT also signed an accord on September 22nd for direct interconnections through a submarine cable known as ALBA 1, which allows direct phone calls between the two countries. These services will begin operations as soon as technical tests conclude and financial operations are defined.

The Cuban telecom company said that negotiations are underway to implement other services, such as the exchange of SMS messages and Internet for SPRINT and Cuba clients.

Meanwhile, the Cuban entity is in contact with other U.S. telephone operators interested in signing bilateral accords with Cuba.

SPRINT Communications Company LP is a Kansas-based entity and offers land and mobile telephone services as well as a global provider of Internet and data transmission services.

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