

See page 6 of the PDF file

Work on replacing out-of-date analog system equipment with modern digital communications system is currently underway as part of the general plan for modernization of the national communications network. Over the past several years, more than 20 digital telephone stations have been installed in Turkmenistan. This has increased the availability of telephone numbers by 100,000. Two German companies, Siemens and Alcatel, are carrying out the largest telephone network upgrading projects. A project to construct 708 kilometers of the Trans Asian-European fiberoptic communications line (TAE) within the boundaries of Turkmenistan was completed in 1997 by the Iranian National Telecommunications Company. The German company Siemens supplied most of the equipment for this project. Siemens has also supplied GSM equipment for about 5,000 phone numbers to Texas-based Barash Communication Technologies, Inc. The exclusive cellular and paging communications service provider is currently negotiating several additional contracts with the communications ministry. The government plans a gradual upgrade of the existing communications network by replacing it with a digital communications system, building new trunk communications lines, and developing new international communications channels.