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## **Bertelsmann's majority acquisition of RTL Group approved by EU Commission / Bertelsmann takes reins of Europe's No. 1 in TV and Radio business**

*Gütersloh (ots) -*

The EU Commission in Brussels has approved Bertelsmann AG's acquisition of a controlling interest in Europe's leading television and radio conglomerate, the RTL Group. Bertelsmann Chairman and CEO Thomas Middelhoff today welcomed this as a significant landmark in enhancing growth and success for his company.

"We now have the necessary majority to forge ahead with our television business, and have considerably strengthened our position as a content powerhouse," Middelhoff said. "RTL Group offers exceptional content, popular brands, and access to millions of viewers, listeners and Internet users across Europe. By assuming clear leadership of Europe's largest and most successful broadcasting company, Bertelsmann strengthens its position in tomorrow's television market and provides RTL Group's management the opportunity to exploit a wide range of synergies with our other corporate divisions."

As reported, Bertelsmann is acquiring - in addition to its existing 37 percent share - an approximately 30 percent share in RTL Group from Groupe Bruxelles Lambert (GBL). In return, GBL will receive a 25.1 percent interest in Bertelsmann AG, of which 0.1 percent are non-voting shares. Now that EU authorities have so authorized, the stock swap will be carried out on July 2, 2001. GBL has the option of selling its Bertelsmann shares on the stock market starting in 2005.

RTL Group is listed on the London, Brussels and Luxembourg stock exchanges. The group operates 24 TV stations and 17 radio stations in 10 countries, while RTL World makes it the market leader on the Internet as well.

About Bertelsmann AG ([www.bertelsmann.com](http://www.bertelsmann.com))

Bertelsmann commands leading positions in the global media and entertainment industries. The Bertelsmann Group consists of publishing and music companies, book and music clubs, magazines and newspapers, television and radio stations, print and media service providers, as well as multimedia and professional information companies - including such brands as Random House, BMG (RCA, Arista, Ariola), Gruner + Jahr (Stern, Geo, Capital) and RTL - with strong appeal for readers, listeners, viewers and Internet surfers. Bertelsmann is the world's largest general-interest book publisher and the biggest English-language book-publishing house worldwide. Its 41 million members make the Bertelsmann book and music clubs the global No. 1, both internationally and in all regional markets. With RTL Group, the company is the European market leader in broadcasting. The Gruner + Jahr publishing house occupies a top position in the European and US magazine business. Bertelsmann is also a leading media company on the Internet and the world's No.2 in media e-commerce. The group employs more than 81,000 people in 60 countries and posted total revenues of 16.5 billion Euro in the 1999/00 business year ended June 30, 2000. In the first six months of the current business year 2000/2001, revenues rose by nearly 40 percent over the same period last year, to 10.4 billion Euro.

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