

MOBILE TELESYSTEMS OJSC  
Form 20-F/A  
June 25, 2004

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## SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20549

### Form 20-F/A (Amendment No. 1)

- o **Registration Statement pursuant to Section 12(b) or (g) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934**  

or
- ý **Annual report pursuant to Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2003**  

or
- o **Transition report pursuant to Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934**  
**Commission file number 333-12032**

## MOBILE TELESYSTEMS OJSC

(Exact name of Registrant as specified in its charter)

**RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

(Jurisdiction of incorporation or organization)

**4 Marksistskaya Street, Moscow 109147 Russian Federation**

(Address of Principal Executive Offices)

Securities registered or to be registered pursuant to Section 12(b) of the Act:

| Title of Each Class  | Name of Each Exchange on Which Registered    |
|--|--|
| <b>AMERICAN DEPOSITARY SHARES,<br/>EACH REPRESENTING 20 SHARES OF COMMON STOCK</b> | <b>NEW YORK STOCK EXCHANGE</b>               |
| <b>COMMON STOCK, PAR VALUE 0.10 RUSSIAN RUBLES PER<br/>SHARE</b>                   | <b>NEW YORK STOCK EXCHANGE<sup>(1)</sup></b> |

Securities registered or to be registered pursuant to Section 12(g) of the Act:

**NONE**  
(Title of Class)

Securities for which there is a reporting obligation pursuant to Section 15(d) of the Act:

**10.95% NOTES DUE 2004**

(Title of Class)

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Indicate the number of outstanding shares of each of the issuer's classes of capital or common stock as of the close of the period covered by the annual report.

1,983,359,507 ordinary shares, par value 0.10 Russian rubles each, as of December 31, 2003

Indicate by check mark whether the Registrant (1) has filed all reports required to be filed by Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the Registrant was required to file such reports), and (2) has been subject to such filing requirements for the past 90 days.

Yes:

No.:

Indicate by check mark which financial statement item the Registrant has elected to follow:

Item 17

Item 18

(1)

Listed, not for trading or quotation purposes, but only in connection with the registration of ADSs pursuant to the requirements of the Securities and Exchange Commission.

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**Explanatory Note**

This Amendment No. 1 on Form 20-F/A amends Mobile TeleSystems OJSC's annual report on Form 20-F for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2003 to update "Item 3. Key Information D. Risk Factors" and to include a summary describing the differences between the New York Stock Exchange corporate governance requirements for U.S. companies and our current practices pursuant to Section 303A.11 of the New York Stock Exchange's Listed Company Manual.

This Amendment No. 1 on Form 20-F/A is not intended to revise, update, amend or restate the information presented in any other Item of Mobile TeleSystems OJSC's annual report on Form 20-F or reflect any events that have occurred after the Form 20-F was filed on June 16, 2004.

In this Amendment No. 1 on Form 20-F/A, unless the context otherwise requires, references to "MTS," "we," "us" or "our" refer to Mobile TeleSystems OJSC and its subsidiaries. "UMC" refers to Ukrainian Mobile Communications, our Ukrainian operations, which we acquired in March 2003. We refer to Mobile TeleSystems LLC, our 49%-owned joint venture in Belarus as MTS-Belarus. As MTS-Belarus is an equity investee, our revenues and subscriber data do not include MTS-Belarus.

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In this Amendment No. 1 on Form 20-F/A, references to "U.S. dollars," "dollars," "\$" or "USD" are to the lawful currency of the United States, references to "rubles" or "RUR" are to the lawful currency of the Russian Federation, references to "hryvnias" are to the lawful currency of Ukraine and references to "€," "euro" or "EUR" are to the lawful currency of the member states of the European Union that adopted a single currency in accordance with the Treaty of Rome establishing the European Economic Community, as amended by the treaty on the European Union, signed at Maastricht on February 7, 1992.

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### Item 3. Key Information

#### D. Risk Factors

*An investment in our securities involves a high degree of risk. You should carefully consider the following information about these risks, together with other information contained in this document, before you decide to buy our securities. If any of the following risks actually occur, our business, prospects, financial condition or results of operations could be adversely affected. The value of our securities could also decline and you could lose all or part of your investment.*

#### Risks Relating to Business Operations in Emerging Markets

***Emerging markets such as the Russian Federation, Belarus and Ukraine are subject to greater risks than more developed markets, including significant legal, economic and political risks.***

Investors in emerging markets such as the Russian Federation, Belarus and Ukraine should be aware that these markets are subject to greater risk than more developed markets, including in some cases significant legal, economic and political risks. Investors should also note that emerging economies such as the economy of the Russian Federation, Belarus and Ukraine are subject to rapid change and that the information set out herein may become outdated relatively quickly. Accordingly, investors should exercise particular care in evaluating the risks involved and must decide for themselves whether, in light of those risks, their investment is appropriate. Generally, investment in emerging markets is only suitable for sophisticated investors who fully appreciate the significance of the risks involved and investors are urged to consult with their own legal and financial advisors before making an investment in our securities.

#### Risks Relating to Our Business

***If UMC or our purchase of UMC is found to have violated Ukrainian law or the purchase is unwound, our business, prospects and results of operations would be materially adversely affected.***

On June 7, 2004, the General Prosecutor of Ukraine filed a claim against us and others in the Kiev Commercial Court seeking to unwind the sale by Ukrtelecom of its 51% stake in UMC to us. The complaint also seeks an order that would prohibit us from alienating 51% of our stake in UMC until the claim is resolved on the merits. The claim is based on a provision of the Ukrainian privatization law that included Ukrtelecom among a list of "strategic" state holdings prohibited from alienating or encumbering its assets during the course of its privatization. While the Ukrainian Cabinet of Ministers in May 2001 issued a decree specifically authorizing the sale by Ukrtelecom of its entire stake in UMC, the General Prosecutor asserts that the decree contradicted the privatization law and that the sale by Ukrtelecom was therefore illegal and should be unwound. In addition, as UMC was formed during the time that Ukraine's legislative framework was developing in an uncertain legal environment, its formation and capital structure may also be subject to challenges. In the event that UMC or our purchase of UMC is found to have violated Ukrainian law or the purchase is unwound, in whole or in part, our business, prospects and results of operations would be materially adversely affected.

***Our principal shareholders have the ability to control our operations and their interests may conflict with those of holders of our securities, and they may make decisions that materially adversely affect your investment.***

Together our principal shareholders, Sistema and T-Mobile, control directly or indirectly approximately 77% of our voting shares and Sistema alone controls 50.6% of our shares. As a result, our principal shareholders have the ability to implement actions requiring shareholder approval, including the election of directors and the declaration of dividends, and have the ability to control our operations. Therefore, decisions made by Sistema or T-Mobile will influence our business, results of

operations and financial condition, and these decisions may conflict with the interests of the holders of our securities.

Moreover, under a shareholders' agreement between Sistema and T-Mobile, T-Mobile undertakes to vote to ensure (in so far as it is able) that Sistema has a majority of the members of our board of directors. However, certain corporate actions will require T-Mobile's approval, including new issuances of our shares, actions which would dilute T-Mobile's shareholding in us and acquisitions by us with a value greater than 25% of the balance sheet value of MTS OJSC's total assets, in accordance with Russian accounting standards. Under the shareholders' agreement, both Sistema and T-Mobile have a right of first refusal with respect to sales of our shares by the other party to third parties, subject to certain exceptions. The shareholders' agreement may, subject to a three-month remedy period, be terminated by either party, if the other party holds less than 25% of our share capital.

Our controlling shareholder Sistema has outstanding a significant amount of indebtedness, including \$350.0 million of notes maturing in 2008 and \$350.0 million of notes maturing in 2011. In addition, the notes maturing in 2011 can be redeemed at the option of the noteholders in 2007. Therefore, Sistema will require significant funds to meet its obligations, which may have to come in part from dividends paid by its subsidiaries, including us.

Under the shareholders' agreement, Sistema and T-Mobile have also agreed to consult each other with respect to any dividend policy, with the expectation that annual dividends will be not less than the equivalent of 25% of MTS OJSC's net profits, in accordance with Russian accounting standards. Our principal shareholders voted in favor of declaring dividends in 2003 and are expected to do so at our next annual shareholders' meeting in 2004. The indentures relating to our outstanding notes do not restrict our ability to pay dividends. As a result of paying dividends, our reliance on external sources of financing may increase, and our cash flow and ability to repay our debt obligations, or make capital expenditures, investments and acquisitions could be materially adversely affected. See "Item 5. Operating and Financial Review and Prospects B. Liquidity and Capital Resources."

In addition, Sistema has agreed to fund the full and timely repayment of one of our loans, which had a balance of \$23.4 million as of December 31, 2003. Sistema's failure to pay this amount could adversely affect our cash position. Sistema also owns interests in Skylink CJSC, JSC Personal Communications and MCC, which currently operate on CDMA and older NMT standards in the Moscow and St. Petersburg and certain other license areas, but plan to develop broader wireless network in Russia using the latest CDMA standard. These companies intend to be niche players, targeting high-end businesses and residential customers which could result in increased competition for us.

***Increased competition and a more diverse subscriber base have resulted in decreasing average monthly service revenues per subscriber and increasing subscriber churn, which may adversely affect our results of operations.***

While our subscriber base and revenues are growing as we continue to grow our operations, our average monthly service revenues per subscriber are decreasing and subscriber churn is increasing. We expect per subscriber revenues to continue to decrease and subscriber churn to continue to increase due to tariff decreases, lower tariffs in the regions outside of the Moscow license area and the increase of mass-market subscribers as a proportion of our overall subscriber mix. See "Item 5. Operating and Financial Review and Prospects." This decrease in our average monthly service revenues per subscriber and increase in subscriber churn may adversely affect our results of operations.

***We are substantially dependent on a single supplier of billing system software, which may adversely affect our ability to control our costs and expand our network.***

We are substantially dependent on a single Russian supplier of our billing system equipment and software. As we have expanded and our subscriber base has grown, we have routinely required

upgrades to our billing systems to manage the increased capacity. Because of the high cost of investing in and installing billing systems, our ability to change our suppliers is limited. As a result, our billing system supplier has the ability to unilaterally increase the costs for system and software upgrades to above-market prices which, in turn, may adversely affect our ability to control our costs and expand our network.

***Our failure to implement the necessary infrastructure to manage our growth could have a material adverse effect on our business and results of operations.***

Our billing system registers and debits the account of a subscriber for calls made by such subscriber after such calls are made. There could be potential delays between the time that a subscriber's balance reaches zero and the disconnection of such subscriber from our network. During the first quarter of 2003, certain dealers and subscribers together fraudulently exploited these billing time lags by placing a sizeable amount of domestic and international long distance calls using subscriber accounts registered under false names. We discovered this fraud in March 2003, and we estimate that we incurred approximately \$16.7 million in losses during 2003 as a result of this dealer fraud. We have taken measures that we believe will prevent further use of this scheme, such as requiring our subscribers to activate their long distance services in person at our service centers. This, in turn, may cause us to lose subscribers who view the new requirement as burdensome and adversely affect our market share. We have also canceled our contracts with certain dealers who had the highest numbers of fraudulent accounts.

The failure or breakdown of key components of our infrastructure in the future, including our billing system, could have a material adverse effect on our business and results of operations.

***If we cannot successfully develop our network, we will be unable to expand our subscriber base.***

We plan to expand our network infrastructure in the following ways:

extend coverage and increase the capacity of our existing network in the Moscow and regional license areas;

further develop our operations in Ukraine and make investments in MTS Belarus; and

introduce service in the regions in which we have licenses and have not yet commenced operations.

Our ability to increase our subscriber base depends upon the success of our network expansion. We have expended considerable amounts of resources to enable this expansion. For a discussion of our regional expansion, see "Item 4. Information on Our Company A. History and Development Expansion." Limited information regarding the potential regional markets into which we are considering expanding, either through acquisitions or new licenses, complicates accurate forecasts of future revenues from those regions, increasing the risk that we may overestimate these revenues. In addition, we have expanded our network through acquisitions and we may continue to engage in further acquisitions. We may not be able to integrate previous or future acquisitions successfully or operate them profitably.

The integration of our businesses, including those we may acquire in the future, requires significant time and effort from our senior management, who are also responsible for managing our existing operations. The integration of our businesses may also be difficult as our technical systems and culture may differ from those of the acquired businesses, unpopular cost cutting measures may be required, and control of cash flow may be difficult to establish. Any difficulties encountered in the transition and integration process could have a material adverse effect on our results of operations.

We also may face problems and complications during the course of our expansion into countries outside of the Russian Federation to which we are unaccustomed. For example, after we signed

agreements for the acquisition of a majority stake in UMC in November 2002, a lawsuit was filed in Ukraine seeking to prevent the sale by one of the selling shareholders, Ukrtelecom, of its shares in UMC. This lawsuit was dismissed and our acquisition of a majority stake in UMC was consummated in March 2003. In June 2004, the General Prosecutor of Ukraine filed a claim against us and others seeking to unwind our purchase of Ukrtelecom's stake in UMC.

The buildout of our network is also subject to risks and uncertainties, which could delay the introduction of service in some areas and increase the cost of network construction, including difficulty in obtaining base station sites on commercially attractive terms. In addition, telecommunications equipment used in Russia is subject to governmental certification, which must be renewed at least every three years. The failure of any equipment we use to receive timely certification or re-certification could also hinder our expansion plans. We also, at times, put our equipment into operation prior to receiving certification, which could lead to administrative sanctions including fines and/or the seizure of such equipment. To the extent we fail to expand our network on a timely basis, we could experience difficulty in expanding our subscriber base.

***Difficulty in obtaining adequate managerial and operational resources may restrict our ability to successfully expand our operations.***

We have experienced substantial growth and development in a relatively short period of time. Management of this growth has required significant managerial and operational resources and is likely to continue to do so. In response to this growth, we have recently added two new first vice president positions, subordinate only to our chief executive officer. Our future operating results depend, in significant part, on the continued contributions of a small number of our key senior management and technical personnel. Management of growth will require, among other things:

stringent control of network buildout and other costs;

the ability to integrate new acquisitions into our operations;

continued development of financial and management controls and information technology systems, and their implementation in newly acquired businesses;

implementation of adequate internal control over financial reporting and disclosure controls and procedures;

increased marketing activities;

provision of additional service centers;

hiring and training of new personnel; and

coordination among our logistical, technical, accounting, finance, marketing and sales personnel.

Our success will depend, in part, on our ability to continue to attract, retain and motivate qualified personnel. Competition in Russia and Ukraine for personnel with relevant expertise is intense, due to the small numbers of qualified individuals. Although we attempt to structure our compensation packages in a manner consistent with evolving standards of the Russian and Ukrainian labor markets, we are not insured against damage that may be incurred in case of the loss or dismissal of our key personnel. Our failure to successfully manage our growth and personnel needs could have a material adverse effect on our business and results of operations.

***If we cannot interconnect cost-effectively with other telecommunications operators, we may be unable to provide services at competitive prices and therefore lose market share and revenues.***

Our ability to provide commercially viable services depends on our ability to continue to interconnect cost-effectively with the Moscow City Telephone Network, or MGTS, in Russia, Ukrtelecom, in Ukraine, and other local, domestic and international telecommunications operators.





Fees for interconnection are established by agreements with network operators and vary, depending on the network used, the nature of the call and the call destination. We have entered into interconnection agreements with several local, domestic and international telecommunications operators, including MGTS and Rostelecom in Russia and UTEL and Ukrtelecom in Ukraine. Interconnection with these operators is required to complete calls originating on our network but terminating outside of it and to complete calls to our subscribers originating outside of our network.

In Ukraine, the government plans in 2004 to privatize Ukrtelecom, whose market share of all fixed line telecommunications services in Ukraine is over 80%, and it is unclear how this privatization will affect our interconnection arrangements and costs.

Although Russian legislation requires that operators of public switched telephone networks may not refuse to provide interconnections or discriminate against one operator by comparison with another, we believe that, in practice, some public network operators attempt to impede mobile operators by delaying interconnection applications and charging varying interconnect rates to different mobile operators and, in particular, more favorable rates to local mobile operators, potentially enabling our competitors to offer lower prices. Any difficulties or delays in interconnecting cost-effectively with other networks could hinder our ability to provide services at competitive prices or at all, causing us to lose market share and revenues, which could have a material adverse effect on our business and results of operations.

***Governmental regulation of our interconnect rates in Ukraine could adversely affect our results of operations.***

Under the Telecommunications Law adopted in November 2003, the State Committee on Communications and Informatization, or the SCCI, in Ukraine is entitled to regulate the tariffs for public telecommunications services rendered by fixed line operators, whereas the mobile cellular operators (including UMC) are entitled to set their retail tariffs and negotiate interconnect rates with other operators. However, the SCCI would be entitled to regulate the interconnect rates of any mobile cellular operator declared a "dominant market force" by the Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine, or the AMC. In March 2004, the AMC began a review of the telecommunications services market for the purpose of determining the status of competition and the existence of dominant market forces. In April 2004, UMC reduced its interconnect rates at the recommendation of the AMC. Government regulation of our interconnect rates could cause our interconnect revenues to decrease or be limited, which could have a material adverse effect on our results of operations.

In addition, we believe that the state-owned fixed line operator monopolies, Ukrtelecom and UTEL, are currently able to influence telecommunications policy and regulation and may cause substantial increases in interconnect rates for access to fixed operators' networks by the mobile cellular operators. Such increases could cause our costs to increase, which could have a material adverse effect on our results of operations.

***If frequencies currently assigned to us are reassigned to other users or if we fail to obtain renewals of our frequency allocations, our network capacity will be constrained and our ability to expand limited, resulting in a loss of market share and lower revenues.***

There is a limited amount of frequencies available for mobile operators in each of the regions in which we operate or hold licenses to operate. We are dependent on access to adequate spectrum allocation in each market in which we operate in order to maintain and expand our subscriber base. While we believe that our current spectrum allocations are sufficient, frequency may not be allocated to us in the future in the quantities, with the geographic span and for time periods that would allow us to provide wireless services on a commercially feasible basis throughout all of our license areas. For example, the availability of frequencies in the GSM 900 MHz band in Ukraine is limited by the fact that the Ukrainian military has a number of frequencies for its exclusive use. While future capacity

constraints could be reduced by an increase in the GSM frequencies allocated to us, including additional frequencies in the GSM 1800 MHz band, we may not be awarded some or all of the remaining GSM spectrum. In addition, the Ukrainian government is currently delaying the allocation of new frequencies to mobile communications operators in Ukraine which, in turn, may constrain our network capacity in those areas of Ukraine characterized by high subscriber usage.

A loss of assigned spectrum allocation, which is not replaced by other adequate allocations, could also have a substantial adverse impact on our network capacity. For example, on September 5, 2000, we received a letter from the State Service for Communication Control, a department of the Ministry of Information Technologies and Communications, informing us of the cancellation of the approval the State Service for Communication Control had given us in May 2000 for certain frequencies within the 900 MHz band in order to install base stations with restricted emanation, which we used primarily for the development of our network in the underground stations of the Moscow subway system. While the Department of Communications Control, also under the Ministry of Information Technologies and Communications, halted the implementation of this letter on September 14, 2000, and the Ministry of Information Technologies and Communications reinstated these frequency allocations to us on November 14, 2000, future such attempts may be made to remove frequency allocations from us. In addition, frequency allocations are often issued for periods that are shorter than the terms of the licenses, and such allocations may not be renewed in a timely manner or at all. If our frequencies are revoked or we are unable to renew our frequency allocations, our network capacity would be constrained and our ability to expand limited, resulting in a loss of market share and lower revenues.

***We may be required to contribute to the cost of the Russian government's 900 MHz frequency conversion, which could have a material adverse effect on our results of operations.***

A program was approved by the Russian government in November 2001 providing for the transfer during 2002-2003 of the frequency used by air traffic control systems in order to allocate additional frequency for mobile communications. In the event that we and other mobile operators are required by the Russian government to finance the costs of such frequency transfer and we are unable to pass on all or some of this expense to our subscribers, our results of operations could be materially adversely affected. To date, neither we nor, to our knowledge, any of our competitors have been required to make any such contribution.

***Because we lack full redundancy and insurance for our systems, a systems failure could prevent us from operating our business and lead to a loss of subscribers, damage to our reputation and violations of the terms of our licenses and subscriber contracts.***

We have back-up capacity for our network management, operations and maintenance systems, but automatic transfer to back-up capacity is limited. In the event that the primary network management center was unable to function, significant disruptions to our systems would occur, including our inability to provide services. Disruptions in our services in the Moscow license area have occurred on August 3, 2000, December 15, 2000, January 23, 2001 and May 30, 2003, and these types of disruptions may recur, which could lead to a loss of subscribers, damage to our reputation and violations of the terms of our licenses and subscriber contracts.

Our computer and communications hardware is protected through physical and software safeguards. However, it is still vulnerable to fire, storm, flood, loss of power, telecommunications failures, interconnection failures, physical or software break-ins and similar events. We do not carry business interruption insurance to protect us in the event of a catastrophe, even though such an event could have a material adverse effect on our business.

***Failure to fulfill the terms of our licenses, including the payment of license contributions, could result in their suspension or termination, which could have a material adverse effect on our business and results of operations.***

Our licenses contain various requirements. These include participation in a federal communications network, adherence to technical standards, investment in network infrastructure and employment of Russian technical personnel. GSM operators are required to provide service to the federal government at regulated tariff rates.

In addition, most of our current licenses provide for payments to be made to finance telecommunication infrastructure improvements, which in the aggregate could total approximately \$110.0 million as of December 31, 2003. However, no decisions regulating the terms and conditions of such payments have been formulated. Accordingly, we have made no payments to date pursuant to any of the current licenses which could require such payments.

Each of our licenses also requires service to be started by a specific date. Each of our licenses, other than the licenses which cover the Moscow license area, also contains requirements as to the number of subscribers and required territorial coverage to be reached by specified dates. Our licenses for the Moscow license area contain requirements relating to network capacity. These requirements are subject to adjustment during the term of the license.

If we fail to comply with the requirements of applicable Russian or Ukrainian law, or we fail to meet the terms of our licenses, our licenses and other authorizations necessary for our operation may be suspended or terminated. For example, our Ukrainian licenses have not been updated to reflect changes in our identification information. A suspension or termination of our licenses or other necessary governmental authorizations could curtail our operations, which could have a material adverse effect on our business and results of operations.

***If we are unable to maintain our favorable brand image, we may be unable to attract new subscribers and retain existing subscribers, leading to loss of market share and revenues.***

Our ability to attract new subscribers and retain existing subscribers depends in part on our ability to maintain what we believe to be our favorable brand image. Negative rumors regarding our services or our company could negatively affect this brand image, which could lead to loss of market share and revenues.

***We may be unable to obtain licenses for third-generation, or UMTS, mobile cellular services on commercially reasonable terms or at all, which would hinder us from competing effectively with operators who are able to provide these services and limit our ability to expand our services.***

The Ministry of Information Technologies and Communications has previously stated that it expected to announce the procedures for the award of licenses for UMTS mobile cellular services during 2002, and then during 2003. To date, however, no procedures have been announced. Depending upon the procedures adopted, we may be unable to obtain UMTS licenses on commercially reasonable terms or at all. Failure to obtain UMTS licenses for the Moscow and other license areas or Ukraine (although we do not believe that the award of UMTS licenses in Ukraine is imminent) would hinder us from competing effectively with operators who are able to provide these services and limit our ability to expand our services, which could have a material adverse effect on our prospects, business and results of operations.

***Failure to renew our licenses or receive renewed licenses with similar terms to our existing licenses could have a material adverse effect on our business and results of operations.***

Our licenses expire in various years from 2006 to 2013 and may be renewed in Russia and Ukraine upon application to the Federal Service for Supervision in the Area of Communications and the SCCI, respectively. Governmental officials have broad discretion in deciding whether to renew a license, and

may not renew our licenses after expiration. If our licenses are renewed, they may be renewed with additional obligations, including payment obligations, or for reduced service areas. Failure to renew our licenses or receive renewed licenses with similar terms to our existing licenses, particularly for the Moscow, Ukraine, North-West and Krasnodar license areas, could significantly diminish our service area, which could have a material adverse effect on our business and results of operations.

***We engage in transactions with related parties, which may present conflicts of interest, resulting in the conclusion of transactions on terms not determined by market forces.***

We, our principal shareholders and their affiliates have engaged in several significant transactions among us and may continue to do so. We have purchased interests in various mobile telecommunications companies from Sistema and T-Mobile, and entered into arrangements with affiliates of Sistema for advertising and insurance services. In addition, we have entered into interconnection and telephone numbering capacity purchase agreements with MGTS, Telmos and MTU-Inform, which are subsidiaries of Sistema, as well as office leases with MGTS. Furthermore, we have entered into a number of arrangements with T-Mobile and its affiliates, including agreements for the purchase of shares of UMC, and we have entered into a number of equipment lease agreements with Invest-Svyaz-Holding, one of our shareholders and a wholly-owned subsidiary of Sistema. Conflicts of interest may arise between us, our affiliates and our principal shareholders or their affiliates, resulting in the conclusion of transactions on terms not determined by market forces.

***If the Federal Antimonopoly Service were to conclude that we acquired or created a new company in contravention of antimonopoly legislation, it could impose administrative sanctions and require the divestiture of this company or other assets, which could have a material adverse effect on our business and results of operations.***

Our business has grown substantially through the acquisition and founding of companies, many of which required the prior approval of or subsequent notification to the Federal Antimonopoly Service or its predecessor agencies. In part, relevant legislation in certain cases restricts the acquisition or formation of companies by groups of companies or individuals acting in concert without such prior approval or notification. While we believe that we have complied with the applicable legislation for our acquisitions and formation of new companies, this legislation is sometimes vague and subject to varying interpretations. If the Federal Antimonopoly Service were to conclude that an acquisition or creation of a new company was done in contravention of applicable legislation, it could impose administrative sanctions and require the divestiture of this company or other assets, which could have a material adverse effect on our business and results of operations.

***In the event that the minority shareholders of our subsidiaries were to successfully challenge past interested party transactions or do not approve interested party transactions in the future, we could be limited in our operational flexibility.***

In some of our subsidiaries we own less than 100% of the equity, with the remaining equity balance being held by minority shareholders. These subsidiaries have in the past carried out, and continue to carry out, numerous transactions with us and our other subsidiaries which may be considered "interested party transactions" under Russian law, requiring approval by disinterested directors, disinterested independent directors or disinterested shareholders. See "Item 10. Additional Information B. Charter and Certain Requirements of Russian Legislation Interested Party Transactions." These transactions have not always been properly approved, and therefore may be challenged by minority shareholders. In some cases, minority shareholders may not approve transactions which are interested party transactions requiring approval. In the event these minority shareholders were to successfully challenge past interested party transactions, or do not approve interested party transactions in the future, we could be limited in our operational flexibility and our results of operations could be materially adversely affected.

*All or part of our subscriber database, containing private information relating to our subscribers, was illegally copied and stolen in early 2003, and is currently publicly sold in Russia.*

In January 2003, we discovered that our database of subscribers, containing private subscriber information, was illegally copied and stolen. The database contained information such as the names, addresses, home phone numbers, passport details, individual tax numbers and other personal information of approximately 5 million of our subscribers. This database is currently being sold in Russia. In addition, in May 2003, certain subscriber databases of several operators in the North-West region, including those of MTS, MegaFon, Delta Telecom and two other operators, were stolen and are currently being sold.

In December 2003, we completed our internal investigation relating to the theft of our subscriber databases and found that these incidents were due to weaknesses in our internal security in relation to physical access to such information. We have taken measures that we believe will prevent such incidents from occurring in the future, but such incidents may recur in the future.

In January 2003, lawsuits were filed by two of our subscribers seeking compensation for damages resulting from the leak of the subscribers' confidential information. While the subscribers subsequently withdrew their claims, if similar lawsuits are successful in the future, we might have to pay significant damages, including consequential damages, which could have a material adverse effect on our results of operations. Future breaches of security may also negatively impact our reputation and our brand image and lead to a loss of market share, which could materially adversely affect our business, prospects and results of operations.

#### **Risks Relating to Our Financial Condition**

*Servicing and refinancing of our indebtedness will require a significant amount of cash. Our ability to generate cash or obtain financing depends on many factors beyond our control.*

We have a substantial amount of outstanding indebtedness, primarily consisting of the obligations we entered into in connection with our notes and bank loans. At December 31, 2003, our consolidated total debt, including capital lease obligations, was approximately \$1,660.3 million, and we received a \$200.0 million short-term bridge loan in April 2004. We have approximately \$703.3 million in notes and bank loans that are due in 2004.

Our ability to service, repay and refinance our indebtedness and to fund planned capital expenditures will depend on our ability to generate cash in the future. This, to a certain extent, is subject to general economic, financial, competitive, legislative, regulatory and other factors that are beyond our control. If we are unable to generate sufficient cash flow or otherwise obtain funds necessary to make required payments, we may default under the terms of our indebtedness, and the holders of our indebtedness would be able to accelerate the maturity of such indebtedness, which could cause defaults under our other indebtedness.

We may not be able to generate sufficient cash flow or access international capital markets or incur additional indebtedness to enable us to service or repay our indebtedness or to fund our other liquidity needs. We may be required to refinance all or a portion of our indebtedness on or before maturity, sell assets, reduce or delay capital expenditures or seek additional capital. We cannot assure you that any refinancing or additional financing would be available on commercially reasonable terms or at all, or whether our assets could be sold, or if sold, whether the proceeds therefrom would be sufficient to meet our debt service obligations. Our inability to generate sufficient cash flow to satisfy our debt service obligations, or to refinance debt on commercially reasonable terms, would materially adversely affect our business, financial condition, results of operations and prospects. See "Item 5. Operating and Financial Review and Prospects B. Liquidity and Capital Resources."

***If we are unable to obtain adequate capital, we may have to limit our operations substantially, which could have a material adverse effect on our business, prospects and results of operations.***

We will need to make significant capital expenditures, particularly in connection with the development, construction and maintenance of, and the purchasing of software for, our GSM network. We spent approximately \$441.0 million in 2001, approximately \$574 million in 2002, approximately \$959.0 million in 2003 and expect to spend approximately \$1.2 billion in 2004 for the fulfillment of our capital spending plans. In addition, the acquisition of UMTS licenses and frequency allocations and the buildout of a UMTS network would require substantial additional capital expenditures. However, future financings and cash flow from our operations may not be sufficient to meet our planned needs in the event of various unanticipated potential developments, including the following:

lack of external financing sources;

changes in the terms of existing financing arrangements;

construction of the networks at a faster rate or higher capital cost than anticipated;

need for greater than anticipated service and customer support;

pursuit of new business opportunities that require significant investment;

acquisitions or development of any additional licenses;

slower than anticipated subscriber growth;

adverse regulatory developments;

adverse changes in existing interconnect arrangements; or

deterioration in the Russian economy.

To meet our financing requirements, we may need to attract additional equity or debt financing. Russian companies are limited in their ability to issue shares in the form of ADSs or other depository receipts due to new Russian securities regulations that came into force in 2003 providing that no more than 40% of a Russian company's shares may be circulated abroad through sponsored depository receipt programs. Although as of April 1, 2004, our ADS program accounted for only 17.4% of our outstanding shares and may receive another 5% of our shares from the conversion of GDRs to ADSs, the unused portion of this limit could become unavailable to us if our principal shareholders decide to sell their shares in the form of ADSs or other depository receipts. Moreover, the Russian securities regulatory authority may reduce the 40% limit in the future. If we cannot obtain adequate funds to satisfy our capital requirements, we may need to limit our operations significantly, which could have a material adverse effect on our business, prospects and results of operations.

In addition, from time to time, we may merge our subsidiaries into us for operational reasons. Under Russian law, such merger would be considered a reorganization and we would be required to notify MTS' creditors of this reorganization. Russian law also provides that, for a period of 30 days after notice, these creditors would have a right to accelerate MTS' debts and demand reimbursement for applicable losses. In the event that we elect to undertake any such merger and all or part of MTS' debt is accelerated, we may not have the ability to raise the funds necessary for repayment and our business and financial condition could be materially adversely affected.

***Devaluation of the ruble against the U.S. dollar could increase our costs and reduce our revenues.***

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Over the past several years, the ruble has fluctuated dramatically against the U.S. dollar, in the great majority of instances falling in value. The Russian Central Bank from time to time has imposed various currency-trading and transfer restrictions in attempts to support the ruble. The ability of the government and the Russian Central Bank to maintain a stable ruble will depend on many political and

economic factors. These include their ability to finance budget deficits without recourse to printing money, to control inflation and to maintain sufficient foreign currency reserves to support the ruble.

Substantially all of our costs and expenditures, as well as liabilities, are either denominated in or tightly linked to the U.S. dollar. These include capital expenditures and borrowings, including our U.S. dollar-denominated notes. As a result, devaluation of the ruble against the U.S. dollar can adversely affect us by increasing our costs in ruble terms. In order to hedge against this risk, we link our tariffs in Russia, which are payable in rubles, to the U.S. dollar. The effectiveness of this hedge is limited, however, as we may not be able to maintain our U.S. dollar-linked tariffs due to competitive pressures in the event that the ruble devaluates against the U.S. dollar, leading to a loss of revenue in U.S. dollar terms. We do not engage in any other hedging arrangements. The decline in the value of the ruble against the U.S. dollar also reduces the U.S. dollar value of tax savings arising from the depreciation of our property, plant and equipment, since their basis for tax purposes is denominated in rubles at the time of the investment.

***Inflation could increase our costs and adversely affect our results of operations.***

The Russian economy has been characterized by high rates of inflation. In 2003, the inflation rate of 12%, combined with the nominal appreciation of the ruble, resulted in the appreciation of the ruble against the U.S. dollar in real terms. As we tend to experience inflation-driven increases in certain of our costs, including salaries and rents, which are sensitive to rises in the general price level in Russia, our costs in dollar terms will rise. In this situation, due to competitive pressures, we may not be able to raise our tariffs sufficiently to preserve operating margins. Accordingly, high rates of inflation in Russia combined with the nominal appreciation of the ruble could significantly increase our costs and adversely affect our results of operations.

***The requirements to obtain permission from the Central Bank of Russia and/or the National Bank of Ukraine may hinder our ability to enter into certain hard-currency-denominated transactions.***

Certain payments in foreign currency are subject to prior permission by the Central Bank of Russia, including, with various exceptions, the following:

direct investments, except investments from abroad in the charter capital of a Russian company;

portfolio investments;

payments for export-import transactions with settlement over 90 days following completion;

payments with respect to real estate; and

other capital transactions.

These regulations are subject to substantial changes and varying interpretations, complicating both the process of determining whether permission of the Central Bank of Russia is required and the process of obtaining permission. Applying for a currency operation license can be a burdensome and time-consuming process. The Central Bank of Russia may impose additional requirements or deny our request for currency licenses on an arbitrary basis. Similarly, in Ukraine, certain payments in foreign currency are subject to prior permission by the National Bank of Ukraine.

If we are unable to obtain Central Bank of Russia and/or National Bank of Ukraine permissions for hard-currency-denominated transactions requiring such permissions, our long-term borrowing sources may be limited to Russian or Ukrainian financial sources, which may be inadequate or unfavorable compared to international sources. In addition, in the event that we have failed to obtain Central Bank of Russia or National Bank of Ukraine permissions for hard-currency-denominated transactions and borrowings requiring such permissions in the past, such failure could result in severe penalties, including the unwinding of the relevant transactions, fines and administrative penalties assessed against us, and criminal and administrative penalties assessed against our management.



As of December 31, 2003, we had outstanding debt (excluding capital lease obligations) of approximately \$1,549.8 million denominated in U.S. dollars and approximately \$65.0 million denominated in euro. Although we have Russian Central Bank licenses to make payments of principal and interest on these loans, the termination of any of our Russian Central Bank licenses or a breach by us of the terms of a Russian Central Bank license could result in cash flow difficulties and fines and penalties. The loss of a Russian Central Bank license may also constitute an event of default under certain of our agreements, which may result in the acceleration of some or all of our outstanding hard-currency-denominated debt.

A new Russian framework law on exchange controls is scheduled to take effect on June 18, 2004. This law will empower the Russian government and the Central Bank of Russia to further regulate and restrict currency control matters, including operations involving foreign securities and foreign currency borrowings by Russian companies. The new law will also abolish the need for companies to obtain transaction-specific licenses from the Central Bank, envisaging instead the implementation of generally applicable restrictions on currency control operations. Although Central Bank officials have not yet indicated the nature or extent of the regulations they will introduce under the new law, the new regulatory regime could be more restrictive than the restrictions currently in effect and could prevent us from carrying out necessary business transactions, or from successfully implementing our business strategy.

***Vaguely drafted Russian transfer pricing rules and lack of reliable pricing information subject us to the risks of additional costs and penalties.***

Russian transfer pricing rules entered into force in 1999, giving Russian tax authorities the right to make transfer pricing adjustments and impose additional tax liabilities in respect of all controlled transactions, provided that the transaction price differs from the market price by more than 20%. Controlled transactions include transactions between related entities and certain other types of transactions between independent parties, such as foreign trade transactions or transactions with significant (by more than 20%) price fluctuations. The Russian transfer pricing rules are vaguely drafted, leaving wide scope for interpretation by Russian tax authorities and courts. Due to the uncertainties in interpretation of transfer pricing legislation, the tax authorities may challenge our prices and require adjustments. If such price adjustments are upheld by the Russian courts and implemented, we could face significant costs associated with the assessed amount of prior tax underpaid and related interest and penalties, which could have a material adverse effect on our financial condition and results of operations. Although Ukraine has reformed its transfer pricing rules, similar concerns with interpretation and enforcement by the Ukrainian tax authorities exist.

***Restrictions on investments outside of Russia or in hard-currency-denominated instruments in Russia expose our cash holdings to devaluation.***

Currency regulations established by the Russian Central Bank restrict investments by Russian companies outside of Russia and in most hard-currency-denominated instruments in Russia, and there are only a limited number of ruble-denominated instruments in which we may invest our excess cash. Any balances maintained in rubles will give rise to losses if the ruble devalues against the U.S. dollar.

Additionally, Russian companies must repatriate 100% of offshore foreign currency earnings to Russia and convert 25% of those earnings into rubles within seven days from the date on which they were received, although Russian legislation allows the Central Bank of Russia to modify this conversion requirement. We earned, primarily from roaming agreements, approximately \$53.0 million, \$83.0 million and \$154.0 million in foreign currency in 2001, 2002 and 2003, respectively, constituting around 6% of our total revenues each year. The requirement to repatriate and convert foreign currency earnings further increases balances in our ruble-denominated accounts and, consequently, our exposure to devaluation risk.

***Continued or increased limitations on the conversion of rubles to foreign currency in Russia could increase our costs when making payments in foreign currency to suppliers and creditors and could cause us to default on our obligations to them.***

Our major capital expenditures are generally denominated and payable in various foreign currencies, including the U.S. dollar and euro. As of December 31, 2003, we had \$157.1 million and \$109.0 million committed in U.S. dollars and euro, respectively, under contracts with foreign suppliers for purchases in connection with our network infrastructure. To the extent such major capital expenditures involve the importation of equipment and related items, Russian legislation permits the conversion of ruble revenues into foreign currency. However, the market in Russia for the conversion of rubles into foreign currencies is limited. The scarcity of foreign currencies may tend to inflate their values relative to the ruble, and such a market may not continue to exist, which could increase our costs when making payments in foreign currency to suppliers and creditors.

Additionally, any delay or other difficulty in converting rubles into a foreign currency, or delay or restriction in the transfer of foreign currency could limit our ability to meet our payment and debt obligations, which could result in the loss of suppliers, acceleration of debt obligations and cross-defaults.

***Indentures relating to our notes and our controlling shareholder Sistema's notes contain restrictive covenants, which limit our ability to incur debt and to engage in various activities.***

The indentures relating to our notes maturing in 2010, 2008 and 2004 each contain covenants limiting our ability to incur debt, create liens on our properties and enter into sale and lease-back transactions. The indentures also contain covenants limiting our ability to merge or consolidate with another person or convey our properties and assets to another person, as well as our ability to sell or transfer any of our or our subsidiaries' GSM licenses for the Moscow, St. Petersburg, Krasnodar and Ukraine license areas. See "Item 10. Additional Information C. Material Contracts Notes Indentures and Guarantees." Failure to comply with these covenants could cause a default and result in the debt becoming immediately due and payable, which would materially adversely affect our business, financial condition and results of operations.

In addition, Sistema, which controls over 50% of our shares and consolidates our results in its financial statements, is subject to various covenants in the indentures related to its \$350.0 million in aggregate principal amount of notes due 2008 and \$350.0 million in aggregate principal amount of notes due 2011, which impose restrictions on Sistema and its restricted subsidiaries (including us) with respect to, *inter alia*, incurrence of indebtedness, creation of liens and disposal of assets. In these indentures, Sistema undertakes that it will not, and will not permit its restricted subsidiaries (including us) to, incur indebtedness unless a certain debt/EBITDA (as defined therein) ratio is met. In addition to us, Sistema has other businesses that require capital and, therefore the consolidated Sistema group's capacity to incur indebtedness otherwise available to us could be diverted to its other businesses. Sistema may also enter into other agreements in the future that may further restrict it and its restricted subsidiaries (including us) from engaging in these and other activities. We expect Sistema to exercise its control over us in order for Sistema, as a consolidated group, to meet its covenants, which could materially limit our ability to conduct our operations, including the implementation of our business strategy.

***If a change in control occurs, our noteholders may require us to redeem notes not previously called for redemption, which could have a material adverse effect on our financial condition and results of operations.***

Under the terms of our notes maturing in 2004, 2008 and 2010, if a change in control occurs, our noteholders will have the right to require us to redeem notes not previously called for redemption. The price we will be required to pay upon such event will be 101% of the principal amount of the notes, plus accrued interest to the redemption date. A change in control will be deemed to have occurred in any of the following circumstances:

Any person acquires beneficial ownership of 50% or more of the total voting power of all shares of our common stock; provided that the following transactions would not be deemed to result in a change in control:

any acquisition by Sistema, T-Mobile or their respective subsidiaries that results in the 50% threshold being exceeded if, immediately following such transaction, each of Sistema (together with its subsidiaries) and T-Mobile (together with its subsidiaries) beneficially owns more than 25% of the total voting power of all shares of our common stock; and

any acquisition by us, our subsidiary or our employee benefit plan.

We merge or consolidate with or into, or convey, sell, lease or otherwise dispose of all or substantially all of our assets to, another entity or another entity merges into us and, immediately following such transaction, Sistema and T-Mobile together do not beneficially own at least 50% of the total voting power of all shares of common stock of such entity and, individually, do not beneficially own more than 25% of the total voting power of all shares of common stock of such entity.

We no longer beneficially own more than 50% of the issuer's share capital.

If a change in control occurs, and our noteholders exercise their right to require us to redeem all of their notes not previously called for redemption, such event could have a material adverse effect on our financial condition and results of operations.

#### **Risks Relating to Our Industry**

***We face increasing competition from existing licensees that may result in reduced operating margins and loss of market share, as well as different pricing, service or marketing policies.***

The Russian mobile cellular telecommunication services market is becoming increasingly competitive. The trend in Russian government licensing policies has been to increase competition among mobile cellular telecommunication service providers. Russian regulatory authorities have moved from granting exclusive licenses for each technology standard per region to granting multiple licenses covering the same territory. Increased competition may result in reduced operating margins and loss of market share, as well as different pricing, service or marketing policies.

***A merger between our two largest competitors would result in a change in our relative market share in the Russian mobile communications market.***

In August 2003, Russian financial industrial conglomerate Alfa Group, which owns a 25.1% stake in Vimpelcom, announced its purchase of LV Finance, which owns a 25.1% stake in MegaFon. This acquisition gives Alfa Group a 25.1% blocking stake in MegaFon and the press reported that Alfa Group might seek to merge Vimpelcom and MegaFon, Russia's second and third largest mobile communications providers and our two largest competitors. Though it is unclear whether such merger might occur, in the event that it does, it would result in a change in our relative market share in the Russian mobile communications market.

***Our reliance on the GSM standard may prevent us from competing effectively against other existing technologies and new technologies, causing us to lose market share.***

The adoption of UMTS may also increase the competition we face. In Russia, the government expects to complete preparatory work for license tenders for third-generation mobile cellular standards in the near future. The UMTS standard is significantly superior to existing second-generation standards such as GSM, and given our reliance on the GSM standard, we may not be able to develop a strategy compatible with this or any other new technology. The technology we currently use may become obsolete or uncompetitive, and we may not be able to acquire new technologies necessary to compete on reasonable terms. In addition, expenditures in connection with new technology may adversely affect our ability to expand in other areas.

Licenses based on code division multiple access, or CDMA, technology have already been granted for the provision of fixed wireless services in a number of regions throughout Russia. CDMA is a second-generation digital cellular telephony technology that can be used for the provision of both mobile and fixed services. Although CDMA technology is currently classified in Russia as a fixed radio telephone service, it may be used for mobile communications, and it may be offered for use via portable handsets. If CDMA operators were able to obtain permission to offer mobile CDMA services, we would face increased competition.

***The regulatory environment for telecommunications in Russia and Ukraine is uncertain and subject to political influence or manipulation, which may result in negative and arbitrary regulatory and other decisions against us on the basis of other than legal considerations and in preferential treatment for our competitors.***

We operate in an uncertain regulatory environment. The legal framework with respect to the provision of telecommunication services in Russia and Ukraine and in other areas in which we may operate in the future is not well developed, and a number of conflicting laws, decrees and regulations apply to the telecommunications sector. Moreover, regulation is conducted largely through the issuance of licenses and instructions, and governmental officials have a high degree of discretion. In this environment, political influence or manipulation could be used to affect regulatory and other decisions against us on the basis of other than legal considerations. For example, press reports have indicated that the Russian governmental authorities' investigation in late 2003 of Vimpelcom on the grounds that Vimpelcom was illegally operating in Moscow pursuant to a license issued to its 100% owned subsidiary rather than to Vimpelcom itself was based on other than legal considerations. In addition, some of our competitors may receive preferential treatment from the government, potentially giving them a substantial advantage over us. For example, according to press reports, Megafon and Kyivstar, our competitors in Russia and Ukraine, respectively, received preferential treatment in regulatory matters in the past.

***Because of limitations on the rights of license holders and the need to have a license reissued in the event of a merger, our ability to integrate our networks may be restricted, thus preventing us from offering integrated network services.***

As our regional development program proceeds, we intend to integrate our various networks to create a single, unified GSM network. The Federal Law on Communications and other telecommunications regulations prohibit the transfer or assignment of licenses and require that telecommunications services must be provided by the licensee only. Further, applicable regulations require that agreements for the provision of telecommunications services must be concluded and performed only by the licensee. This requirement has been an important factor in our recent acquisitions. As we are unable to buy licenses, we must rather purchase the company holding the license. We also must continue to operate through such company in its license area by entering into agency, lease, services and similar agreements.

We have entered into a series of agreements with a number of our subsidiaries for the provision of network construction services, the lease of mobile switching centers and related services. The government may change its position and view these agreements as violating the general prohibition on

the transfer or assignment of licenses. For example, in 2003, the government challenged Vimpelcom on the grounds that it was illegally operating in Moscow pursuant to a license issued to its 100% owned subsidiary rather than to Vimpelcom itself.

Additionally, Russian law requires that, in the event of a merger, a license held by either of the merging entities must be reissued to the successor entity, rather than simply transferred. We intend to continue to merge with our wholly-owned subsidiaries as part of our efforts to integrate our networks; however, a failure to receive a new license as part of a merger would result in the loss of our ability to operate in that license area.

Restrictions on our ability to enter into contracts with our subsidiaries, or the failure to receive a new license in the event of a merger, would restrict our ability to create a single, unified GSM network, reducing our ability to attract and retain subscribers and compete with a federal, nation-wide licensee in the event that such a license was granted.

***If we were found to have a dominant position in our markets, the government may regulate our tariffs and restrict our operations.***

Under Russian legislation, the Federal Antimonopoly Service may categorize a company as a dominant force in a market. Current Russian legislation does not clearly define "market" in terms of the types of services or the geographic area. As of July 25, 2003, MTS OJSC and our subsidiaries CJSC Kuban-GSM and UDN 900 are categorized as companies with a market share exceeding 35%. Tomsk Cellular Communications, which we purchased in September 2003, was also categorized as a company with a market share in excess of 35% as of July 25, 2003. This classification, in turn, gives the Federal Antimonopoly Service the power to impose certain restrictions on the businesses of those entities. Additionally, UMC, which has over a 50% market share of the Ukrainian mobile cellular communications market, can be categorized as a company with a dominant position in the market and become subject to specific government-imposed restrictions.

If we or any of our subsidiaries were classified as a dominant market force or as having a dominant position in the market, the imposition of government-determined tariffs could result in competitive disadvantages, and our business and results of operations could be materially adversely affected. Additionally, restrictions on expansion or government-mandated withdrawal from regions or markets could reduce our subscriber base and prevent us from implementing our business strategy. Moreover, we could be required to make additional license applications at additional unexpected cost.

***The public switched telephone networks have reached capacity limits and need modernization, which may inconvenience our subscribers and may require us to make substantial investments in public switched telephone networks.***

Due to the recent growth in fixed and mobile telephone use in Moscow, the city's "095" code has reached numbering capacity limits and an additional code or codes are expected to be introduced in the future. Calls between a new code and another code will require callers to dial through "8," the long distance dialing prefix, which is also used by our "federal" number subscribers. See "Item 4. Information on Our Company B. Business Overview Sales and Marketing Tariffs" for a description of our 11-digit federal telephone numbers. The overtaxing of these long distance lines may inconvenience our federal number subscribers by causing incoming and outgoing calls to have lower completion rates. Resolving these issues will require additional investment. In addition, continued growth in local, long-distance and international traffic, including that generated by our subscribers, may require substantial investment in public switched telephone networks.

Although the operators of public switched telephone networks are normally responsible for these investments, their weak financial condition may prevent them from making these investments. Since we are financially strong relative to these public network operators, we may be compelled to make such investments on their behalf, placing an additional burden on our financial and human resources. Additionally, assuming we do make such investments, we may not own the assets resulting from such

investment. While we cannot estimate the financial and operating burdens associated with such investments, they may be substantial.

*Alleged medical risks of cellular technology may subject us to negative publicity or litigation, decrease our access to base station sites, diminish subscriber usage and hinder access to additional financing.*

Electromagnetic emissions from transmitter masts and mobile handsets may harm the health of individuals exposed for long periods of time to these emissions. The actual or perceived health risks of transmitter masts and mobile handsets could materially adversely affect us, including in the following ways:

reduced subscriber growth;

reduced usage per subscriber;

increased number of product liability lawsuits;

increased difficulty in obtaining sites for base stations; and/or

reduced financing available to the wireless communications industry.

*Computer viruses may harm or disrupt our network.*

As mobile cellular networks increase in size and complexity, they are becoming increasingly subject to computer viruses. These viruses can potentially spread throughout a network system, slowing the network and disrupting service. We may be the target of a virus, and if we are, we may not be able to maintain the integrity of our network and operational software, which could result in a material adverse effect on our business and results of operations.

#### **Risks Relating to the Russian Federation and Ukraine**

##### **Economic Risks**

*Economic instability in Russia and Ukraine could adversely affect our business.*

Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Russian and Ukrainian economies have experienced at various times:

significant declines in gross domestic product;

hyperinflation;

an unstable currency;

high government debt relative to gross domestic product;

a weak banking system providing limited liquidity to domestic enterprises;

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high levels of loss-making enterprises that continued to operate due to the lack of effective bankruptcy proceedings;

significant use of barter transactions and illiquid promissory notes to settle commercial transactions;

widespread tax evasion;

growth of a black and gray market economy;

pervasive capital flight;

high levels of corruption and the penetration of organized crime into the economy;

significant increases in unemployment and underemployment; and

the impoverishment of a large portion of the population.

The Russian and Ukrainian economies have been subject to abrupt downturns. In particular, on August 17, 1998, in the face of a rapidly deteriorating economic situation, the Russian government defaulted on its ruble-denominated securities, the Russian Central Bank stopped its support of the

ruble and a temporary moratorium was imposed on certain hard currency payments. These actions resulted in an immediate and severe devaluation of the ruble and a sharp increase in the rate of inflation; a dramatic decline in the prices of Russian debt and equity securities; and an inability of Russian issuers to raise funds in the international capital markets. Certain other CIS countries, including Ukraine and Belarus, were similarly affected by these events.

These problems were aggravated by the near collapse of the Russian banking sector after the events of August 17, 1998, as evidenced by the termination of the banking licenses of a number of major Russian banks. This further impaired the ability of the banking sector to act as a consistent source of liquidity to Russian companies and resulted in the losses of bank deposits in some cases.

Recently, the Russian and Ukrainian economies have experienced positive trends such as the increase in the gross domestic product, relatively stable national currencies, strong domestic demand, rising real wages and a reduced rate of inflation; however, these trends may not continue or may be abruptly reversed.

***We are only able to conduct banking transactions with a limited number of creditworthy Russian banks as the Russian banking system remains underdeveloped, and another banking crisis could place severe liquidity constraints on our business, materially adversely affecting our business, financial position and results of operations.***

Russia's banking and other financial systems are not well developed or regulated and Russian legislation relating to banks and bank accounts is subject to varying interpretations and inconsistent applications. The August 1998 financial crisis resulted in the bankruptcy and liquidation of many Russian banks and almost entirely eliminated the developing market for commercial bank loans. Although the Central Bank of Russia has the mandate and authority to suspend banking licenses of insolvent banks, many insolvent banks still operate. Most Russian banks also do not meet international banking standards, and the transparency of the Russian banking sector still lags far behind internationally accepted norms. Aided by inadequate and lax supervision by the regulators, many banks do not follow existing Central Bank regulations with respect to lending criteria, credit quality, loan loss reserves or diversification of exposure. In Russia, bank deposits are generally not insured under any governmental program. Recently, there has been a rapid increase in lending by Russian banks, which many believe is being accompanied by a deterioration in the credit quality of the borrowers. The serious deficiencies in the Russian banking sector combined with the deterioration in the credit profile of the loan portfolios of Russian banks may result in the banking sector being more susceptible to market downturns or economic slowdowns. If a banking crisis were to occur, Russian companies would be subject to severe liquidity constraints due to the limited supply of domestic funding sources and the withdrawal of foreign funding sources that would occur during such a crisis.

There are currently a limited number of creditworthy Russian banks, most of which are located in Moscow and there are fewer in the regions outside of Moscow. Although we have tried to reduce our risk by receiving and holding funds in a number of Russian banks, including subsidiaries of foreign banks, another banking crisis or the bankruptcy or insolvency of the banks in which we receive or hold our funds could adversely affect our ability to complete banking transactions in Russia and could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial conditions and results of operations.

***The physical infrastructure in Russia and Ukraine is in very poor condition, which could disrupt normal business activity.***

The physical infrastructure in Russia and Ukraine largely dates back to Soviet times and has not been adequately funded and maintained over the past decade. Particularly affected are the rail and road networks; power generation and transmission; communication systems; and building stock. In August 2000, a fire at the main communications tower in Moscow interrupted television and radio broadcasting and the operation of mobile phones for weeks. Road conditions throughout Russia and Ukraine are poor, with many roads not meeting minimum quality requirements. The Russian and



Ukrainian governments are actively considering plans to reorganize the nation's rail, electricity and telephone systems. Any such reorganization may result in increased charges and tariffs while failing to generate the anticipated capital investment needed to repair, maintain and improve these systems.

The deterioration of physical infrastructure in Russia and Ukraine harms the national economies, disrupts the transportation of goods and supplies, adds costs to doing business in these countries and can interrupt business operations. These difficulties can impact us directly; for example, we have needed to keep portable electrical generators available to help us maintain base station operations in the event of power failures. Further deterioration in the physical infrastructure could have a material adverse effect on our business and the value of our securities.

*Fluctuations in the global economy may adversely affect the Russian and Ukrainian economies and our business.*

The Russian and Ukrainian economies are vulnerable to market downturns and economic slowdowns elsewhere in the world. As has happened in the past, financial problems or an increase in the perceived risks associated with investing in emerging economies could dampen foreign investment in Russia and Ukraine and Russian and Ukrainian business could face severe liquidity constraints, further adversely affecting their economies. Additionally, because Russia produces and exports large amounts of oil, the Russian economy is especially vulnerable to the price of oil on the world market and a decline in the price of oil could slow or disrupt the Russian economy. Recent military conflicts and international terrorist activity have also significantly impacted oil and gas prices, and pose additional risks to the Russian economy. Russia and Ukraine are also major producers and exporters of metal products and their economies are vulnerable to world commodity prices and/or the imposition of tariffs by the United States, the European Union or by other principal export markets.

### **Political Risks**

*Governmental instability could adversely affect the value of investments in Russia and Ukraine and the value of our securities.*

Since 1991, Russia has sought to transform itself from a one-party state with a centrally-planned economy to a democracy with a market economy. As a result of the sweeping nature of the reforms, and the failure of some of them, the Russian political system remains vulnerable to popular dissatisfaction, including dissatisfaction with the results of privatizations in the 1990s, as well as to demands for autonomy from particular regional and ethnic groups. Moreover, the composition of the Russian government, the prime minister and the other heads of federal ministries has at times been highly unstable. For example, six different prime ministers headed governments between March 1998 and May 2000. On December 31, 1999, President Yeltsin unexpectedly resigned. Vladimir Putin was subsequently elected president on March 26, 2000 and re-elected for a second term on March 14, 2004. President Putin has maintained governmental stability and even accelerated the reform process. In February 2004, President Putin dismissed his entire cabinet, including the prime minister. This was followed on March 12, 2004, by President Putin's announcement of a far-reaching restructuring of the Russian government, with the stated aim of making the government more transparent and efficient. The changes included, for example, reducing the number of ministries from 30 to 14 and dividing the government into three levels: ministries, services and agencies. The new structure is not yet finalized and implemented.

Future changes in government, major policy shifts or lack of consensus between various branches of the government and powerful economic groups could also disrupt or reverse economic and regulatory reforms.

Similar to Russia, Ukraine has experienced political instability since its independence in 1991, having seen nine changes in prime minister since 1991. The various state authorities, and the relations between them, as well as the Ukrainian government's policies and the political leaders who formulate and implement them, are subject to rapid change.

Any disruption or reversal of the reform policies, recurrence of political or governmental instability or occurrence of conflicts with powerful economic groups could have a material adverse effect on our business and the value of investments in Russia and Ukraine, and the value of our securities could decline.

***Conflict between central and regional authorities and other conflicts could create an uncertain operating environment hindering our long-term planning ability and could adversely affect the value of investments in Russia.***

The Russian Federation is a federation of 89 sub-federal political units, consisting of republics, territories, regions, cities of federal importance and autonomous regions and districts. The delineation of authority and jurisdiction among the members of the Russian Federation and the federal government is, in many instances, unclear and remains contested. Lack of consensus between the federal government and local or regional authorities often results in the enactment of conflicting legislation at various levels and may lead to further political instability. In particular, conflicting laws have been enacted in the areas of privatization, securities, corporate legislation and licensing. Some of these laws and governmental and administrative decisions implementing them, as well as certain transactions consummated pursuant to them, have in the past been challenged in the courts, and such challenges may occur in the future. This lack of consensus hinders our long-term planning efforts and creates uncertainties in our operating environment, both of which may prevent us from effectively and efficiently implementing our business strategy.

Additionally, ethnic, religious, historical and other divisions have, on occasion, given rise to tensions and, in certain cases, military conflict, such as the continuing conflict in Chechnya, which has brought normal economic activity within Chechnya to a halt and disrupted the economies of neighboring regions. Various armed groups in Chechnya have regularly engaged in guerrilla attacks in that area, and recently, other parts of Russia have experienced violence related to the Chechen conflict. Violence and attacks relating to this conflict have also spread to other parts of Russia, and several terrorist attacks have been carried out by Chechen terrorists in Moscow. The further intensification of violence, including terrorist attacks and suicide bombings, or its spread to other parts of Russia, could have significant political consequences, including the imposition of a state of emergency in some or all of Russia. Moreover, any terrorist attacks and the resulting heightened security measures are likely to cause disruptions to domestic commerce and exports from Russia, and could materially adversely affect our business and the value of investments in Russia, including the value of our securities.

***Major changes in Ukraine-Russian relations may adversely affect our business.***

The relationship between Russia and Ukraine has been historically strained due, among others, to Ukraine's failure to pay arrears relating to the supply of energy resources, Russia's introduction of 20% VAT on Ukrainian imports, and border disputes. In recent years, bilateral relations between Ukraine and Russia have improved, due in part to the conclusion in May 1997 of the Friendship and Cooperation Treaty, the conclusion in December 2000 of two inter-governmental agreements on the transit and supply of Russian natural gas, the conclusion in October 2002 of a framework agreement to ensure natural gas transit for the next 30 years and provide for the construction, modernization and operation of gas pipelines, and by Ukraine's ratification in September 2003 of an agreement with Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus to create a "free trade" economic zone.

However, any major changes in Ukraine-Russian relations, in particular any such changes adversely affecting energy supplies from Russia to Ukraine and/or Ukraine's export of services and goods to Russia, could adversely impact the Ukrainian economy and our Ukrainian operations.

### **Risks Relating to the Legal System and Legislation in Russia and Ukraine**

***Weaknesses relating to the legal system and legislation create an uncertain environment for investment and business activity in Russia and Ukraine, which could have a material adverse effect on an investment in our securities.***

Each of Russia and Ukraine is still developing the legal framework required to support a market economy. The following risk factors relating to the Russian and Ukrainian legal systems create uncertainty with respect to the legal and business decisions that we make, many of which uncertainties do not exist in countries with more developed market economies:

inconsistencies between and among laws, the Constitution, Presidential decrees and governmental, ministerial and local orders, decisions, resolutions and other acts;

conflicting local, regional and federal rules and regulations;

the lack of judicial and administrative guidance on interpreting legislation;

the relative inexperience of judges and courts in interpreting legislation;

corruption within the judiciary;

a high degree of discretion on the part of governmental authorities, which could result in arbitrary actions such as suspension or termination of our licenses; and

poorly developed bankruptcy procedures that are subject to abuse.

Additionally, several fundamental laws have only recently become effective. The recent nature of much of Russian and Ukrainian legislation, the lack of consensus about the scope, content and pace of economic and political reform and the rapid evolution of the Russian and Ukrainian legal systems in ways that may not always coincide with market developments place the enforceability and underlying constitutionality of laws in doubt and results in ambiguities, inconsistencies and anomalies. In addition, Russian and Ukrainian legislation often contemplates implementing regulations that have not yet been promulgated, leaving substantial gaps in the regulatory infrastructure. All of these weaknesses could affect our ability to enforce our rights under our licenses and under our contracts, or to defend ourselves against claims by others. Furthermore, we cannot assure you that regulators, judicial authorities or third parties will not challenge our internal procedures and by-laws or our compliance with applicable laws, decrees and regulations.

***The judiciary's lack of independence and inexperience, the difficulty of enforcing court decisions and governmental discretion in enforcing claims could prevent us or you from obtaining effective redress in a court proceeding, materially adversely affecting an investment in our securities.***

The independence of the judicial system and its immunity from economic, political and nationalistic influences in each of Russia and Ukraine remain largely untested. The court system in each of Russia and Ukraine is understaffed and underfunded. Judges and courts are generally inexperienced in the area of business and corporate law. Judicial precedents generally have no binding effect on subsequent decisions. Not all Russian and Ukrainian legislation and court decisions are readily available to the public or organized in a manner that facilitates understanding. The Russian and Ukrainian judicial systems can be slow. Enforcement of court orders can in practice be very difficult in Russia and Ukraine. All of these factors make judicial decisions in Russia and Ukraine difficult to predict and effective redress uncertain. Additionally, court claims are often used in furtherance of political aims or infighting. We may be subject to such claims and may not be able to receive a fair hearing. Additionally, court orders are not always enforced or followed by law enforcement agencies, and the government may attempt to invalidate court decisions by backdating or retroactively applying relevant legislative changes.

These uncertainties also extend to property rights. During Russia and Ukraine's transformation from a centrally planned economy to a market economy, legislation has been enacted to protect private property against expropriation and nationalization. However, it is possible that due to the lack of



experience in enforcing these provisions and due to potential political changes, these protections would not be enforced in the event of an attempted expropriation or nationalization. In Russia, for example, in October 2003, the prosecutor general's office "arrested" or attached approximately 42% of Yukos' shares. Press reports have indicated that the decision of the court to grant this provisional remedy to the prosecutor general's office was influenced by political factors. Some government entities have also tried to renationalize privatized businesses. Expropriation or nationalization of any of our entities, their assets or portions thereof, including UMC, potentially without adequate compensation, would have a material adverse effect on our business.

***Unlawful or arbitrary government action may have an adverse effect on our business and the value of an investment in our securities.***

Governmental authorities have a high degree of discretion in Russia and Ukraine and at times exercise their discretion arbitrarily, without hearing or prior notice, and sometimes in a manner that is contrary to law. Moreover, the government also has the power in certain circumstances, by regulation or government act, to interfere with the performance of, nullify or terminate contracts. Unlawful or arbitrary governmental actions have included withdrawal of licenses, sudden and unexpected tax audits, criminal prosecutions and civil actions. Federal and local government entities also used common defects in matters surrounding the documentation of financing activities as pretexts for court claims and other demands to invalidate such activities and/or to void transactions, often for political purposes.

In addition, in 2003 and thus far in 2004, the Ministry for Taxes and Levies has begun to aggressively crack down on certain Russian companies' use of tax-optimization schemes, and press reports have speculated that these enforcement actions have been selective and politically motivated. For example, in April 2004, Yukos was assessed more than \$3 billion in back taxes in addition to \$5 billion in back taxes assessed in December 2003. Similarly, in March 2004, oil company Sibneft was assessed over \$1 billion in back taxes. Unlawful or arbitrary government action, if directed at us, could have a material adverse effect on our business and on the value of our securities.

***Developing corporate and securities laws and regulations in Russia may limit our ability to attract future investment.***

The regulation and supervision of the securities market, financial intermediaries and issuers are considerably less developed in Russia than in the United States and Western Europe. Disclosure and reporting requirements, anti-fraud safeguards, insider trading restrictions and fiduciary duties are relatively new to Russia and are unfamiliar to most Russian companies and managers. In addition, Russian corporate and securities rules and regulations can change rapidly, which may adversely affect our ability to conduct securities-related transactions. While some important areas are subject to virtually no oversight, the regulatory requirements imposed on Russian issuers in other areas result in delays in conducting securities offerings and in accessing the capital markets. It is often unclear whether, or how, regulations, decisions and letters issued by the various regulatory authorities apply to our company. As a result, we may be subject to fines or other enforcement measures despite our best efforts at compliance, which could have a material adverse effect on our business and financial condition.

***Shareholder liability under Russian legislation could cause us to become liable for the obligations of our subsidiaries.***

The Civil Code and the Federal Law on Joint Stock Companies generally provide that shareholders in a Russian joint stock company are not liable for the obligations of the joint stock company and bear only the risk of loss of their investment. This may not be the case, however, when one person is capable of determining decisions made by another. The person capable of determining such decisions is called an effective parent. The person whose decisions are capable of being so

determined is called an effective subsidiary. The effective parent bears joint and several responsibility for transactions concluded by the effective subsidiary in carrying out these decisions if:

this decision-making capability is provided for in the charter of the effective subsidiary or in a contract between the companies; and

the effective parent gives obligatory directions to the effective subsidiary.

In addition, an effective parent is secondarily liable for an effective subsidiary's debts if an effective subsidiary becomes insolvent or bankrupt resulting from the action or inaction of an effective parent. This is the case no matter how the effective parent's capability to determine decisions of the effective subsidiary arises. For example, this liability could arise through ownership of voting securities or by contract. In these instances, other shareholders of the effective subsidiary may claim compensation for the effective subsidiary's losses from the effective parent which caused the effective subsidiary to take action or fail to take action knowing that such action or failure to take action would result in losses. Accordingly, we could be liable in some cases for the debts of our consolidated subsidiaries. This liability could have a material adverse effect on our business and financial condition.

***Shareholder rights provisions under Russian law may impose additional costs on us, which could cause our financial results to suffer.***

Russian law provides that shareholders, including holders of our ADSs and GDRs, that vote against or abstain from voting on certain matters have the right to sell their shares to us at market value in accordance with Russian law. The decisions that trigger this right to sell shares include:

a reorganization;

the approval by shareholders of a "major transaction," which, in general terms, is a transaction involving property worth more than 50% of the book value of MTS OJSC's assets calculated according to the Russian accounting standards, regardless of whether the transaction is actually consummated; and

the amendment of our charter in a manner that limits shareholder rights.

Our obligation to purchase shares in these circumstances, which is limited to 10% of MTS OJSC's net assets calculated, according to the Russian accounting standards, at the time the matter at issue is voted upon, could have a material adverse effect on our business and financial condition.

***Limitations on foreign investment could impair the value of your investment in our securities and could hinder our access to additional capital.***

Russian and Ukrainian legislation governing foreign investment activities does not prohibit or restrict foreign investment in the telecommunications industry. However, a lack of consensus exists over the manner and scope of government control over the telecommunications industry. While draft legislation protecting the rights of foreign investors specifically in the telecommunications industry has been considered at various times, the Law on Foreign Investment in the Russian Federation does not provide any specific protections in this regard, nor are there specific protections in Ukraine. Because the telecommunications industry is widely viewed as strategically important to Russia and Ukraine, governmental control over the telecommunications industry may increase, and foreign investment in or control over the industry may be limited. Any such increase in governmental control or limitation on foreign investment could impair the value of your investment in our securities and could hinder our access to additional capital.

***The implementation of the new Federal Law on Communications will impose an additional financial burden on us which may adversely affect our financial condition and results of operations.***

The new Federal Law on Communications came into force on January 1, 2004. Among other things, this law provides for the establishment of a "universal services reserve fund" for the purpose of supporting communications companies operating in less developed regions of Russia. This reserve fund will be funded by a levy imposed on all communication services providers, including us and our other



Russian telecommunications subsidiaries, commencing on January 1, 2005. The amount of this levy, the procedure of its collection and procedures for distribution from this reserve fund will be determined in the future by the federal government. This additional levy will increase our costs and may materially adversely affect our financial condition and results of operations.

In addition, the new Ukrainian Law on Telecommunications also came into force on January 1, 2004, though regulations implementing the new law have not yet been promulgated. This law, among other things, may require companies with dominant position in the telecommunications market to develop public telecommunications services if directed to do so by the regulatory authorities. See "Item 4. Information on Our Company B. Business Overview Regulation in Ukraine." As UMC's estimated market share in mobile telecommunication services in Ukraine is over 50%, implementation of the new law may materially adversely affect our financial condition and results of operations.

***Changes in the Russian tax system could materially adversely affect an investment in our securities.***

Generally, taxes payable by Russian companies are substantial and numerous. These taxes include, among others:

income taxes;

value-added tax, or VAT;

excise taxes;

unified social tax; and

property tax.

In practice, the Russian tax authorities often have their own interpretation of the tax laws that rarely favors taxpayers, who often have to resort to court proceedings to defend their position against the tax authorities. Differing interpretations of tax regulations exist both among and within government ministries and organizations at the federal, regional and local levels, creating uncertainties and inconsistent enforcement. Furthermore, following the recent reorganization of the Russian government, the authority for tax regulation is being transferred to the Russian Ministry of Finance, which may lead to further changes in the interpretation of tax laws.

Tax declarations, together with related documentation such as customs declarations, are subject to review and investigation by a number of authorities, each of which may impose fines, penalties and interest charges. Generally, taxpayers are subject to inspection for a period of three calendar years of their activities which immediately preceded the year in which the audit is carried out. As previous audits do not exclude subsequent claims relating to the audited period, the statute of limitations is not entirely effective. In addition, in some instances, new tax regulations have been given retroactive effect.

The taxation system in Russia is subject to frequent changes, varying interpretations and inconsistent enforcement at the federal, regional and local levels. In some instances, new tax regulations have been given retroactive effect, while under the Tax Code only laws benefiting the taxpayer may have retroactive effect. In addition to our substantial tax burden, these conditions complicate our tax planning and related business decisions. For example, tax laws are unclear with respect to the deductibility of certain expenses and at times we have taken a position that may be considered aggressive by tax authorities, but that we consider to be in compliance with current law. Prior to 2003, we also refused to pay a certain levy imposed by government decree rather than established as prescribed under Russian law, though a recent Russian Supreme Court decision upheld the validity and enforceability of this levy, and we have begun paying this levy for periods commencing January 1, 2003. See "Item 4. Information on Our Company B. Business Overview Regulation in the Russian Federation Licensing of Telecommunications Services and Radio Frequency Allocation." This uncertainty potentially exposes us to significant fines and penalties and enforcement measures despite our best efforts at compliance, and could result in a greater than expected tax burden and suspension or termination of our licenses.



Although during the past three years, the Russian government undertook a revision of the Russian tax system and passed certain laws implementing tax reform, the new tax laws continue to rely heavily on the judgments of local tax officials and fail to address many existing problems. Many issues associated with the practical application of new legislation are unclear and this complicates our tax planning and related business decisions. This uncertainty may expose us to fines and penalties. Moreover, additional tax collection measures may be introduced. Accordingly, we may have to pay significantly higher taxes, which could have a material adverse effect on our business and the value of our securities.

Moreover, financial statements of Russian companies prepared in accordance with Russian accounting standards are not consolidated for tax purposes. Therefore, each of our Russian subsidiaries pays its own Russian taxes and may not offset its profit or loss against the loss or profit of any of our other subsidiaries. In addition, pursuant to legislation that entered into force on January 1, 2002, intercompany dividends are subject to a withholding tax of 6% to 15% (the 6% rate is applicable to payments of dividends between two Russian entities). These tax requirements impose additional burdens and costs on our operations, including management resources.

***The implications of the tax system in Ukraine are uncertain and various tax laws are subject to different interpretations.***

Ukraine currently has a number of laws related to various taxes imposed by both central and regional governmental authorities. Applicable taxes include value added tax, corporate income tax (profits tax), customs duties, payroll (social) taxes and other taxes. These tax laws have not been in force for significant periods of time compared to more developed market economies and are constantly changed and amended. Accordingly, few precedents regarding tax issues are available. Differing opinions regarding the legal interpretation of tax laws often exist both among and within governmental ministries and organizations, including the tax administration, creating uncertainties and areas of conflict for taxpayers and investors.

Tax declarations/returns, together with other legal compliance areas (for example, customs and currency control matters), may be subject to review and investigation by various administrative divisions of the tax authorities, which are authorized by law to impose severe fines, penalties and interest charges. These circumstances create tax risks in Ukraine substantially more significant than typically found in countries with more developed tax systems. Generally, tax declarations/returns in Ukraine remain open and subject to inspection for a three-year period. However, this term may not be observed or may be extended under certain circumstances, including in the context of a criminal investigation. While we believe that we are currently in compliance with the tax laws affecting our operations in Ukraine, it is possible that relevant authorities may take differing positions with regard to interpretative issues, which may result in a material adverse effect on our results of operations and financial condition.

**Social Risks**

***Crime and corruption could disrupt our ability to conduct our business as we have in the past and could materially adversely affect our financial condition and results of operations.***

The political and economic changes in Russia and Ukraine in recent years have resulted in significant dislocations of authority. The local and international press have reported that significant organized criminal activity has arisen, particularly in large metropolitan centers. Property crime in large cities has increased substantially. In addition, the local press and international press have reported high levels of official corruption in the locations where we conduct our business, including the bribing of officials for the purpose of initiating investigations by government agencies. Press reports have also described instances in which government officials engaged in selective investigations and prosecutions to further commercial interests of the government officials or certain individuals. Additionally, published reports indicate that a significant number of Russian and Ukrainian media regularly publish slanted

articles in return for payment. The depredations of organized or other crime, demands of corrupt officials or claims that we have been involved in official corruption may in the future bring negative publicity, could disrupt our ability to conduct our business effectively and could thus materially adversely affect our financial condition and results of operations.

***Social instability could increase support for renewed centralized authority, nationalism or violence and thus materially adversely affect our operations.***

The failure of the government and many private enterprises to pay full salaries on a regular basis and the failure of salaries and benefits generally to keep pace with the rapidly increasing cost of living have led in the past, and could lead in the future, to labor and social unrest. For example, in 1998, miners in several regions of Russia, demanding payment of overdue wages, resorted to strikes which included blocking major railroads. Such labor and social unrest may have political, social and economic consequences, such as increased support for a renewal of centralized authority; increased nationalism, with restrictions on foreign involvement in the economies of Russia and Ukraine; and increased violence. Any of these could restrict our operations and lead to the loss of revenue, materially adversely affecting our business.

#### **Risks Relating to the ADSs and the Trading Market**

***Because the depositary may be considered the beneficial holder of the shares underlying the ADSs, these shares may be arrested or seized in legal proceedings in Russia against the depositary.***

Because Russian law may not recognize ADS holders as beneficial owners of the underlying shares, it is possible that you could lose all your rights to those shares if the depositary's assets in Russia are seized or arrested. In that case, you would lose all the money you have invested.

Russian law might treat the depositary as the beneficial owner of the shares underlying the ADSs. This would be different from the way other jurisdictions, such as the states of the United States, treat ADSs. In those jurisdictions, although shares may be held in the depositary's name or to its order and it is therefore a "legal" owner of the shares, the ADS holders are the "beneficial," or real owners. In those jurisdictions, no action against the depositary, the legal owner, would ever result in the beneficial owners losing their shares. Because Russian law may not make the same distinction between legal and beneficial ownership, it may only recognize the rights of the depositary in whose name the shares are held, not the rights of ADS holders, to the underlying shares.

Thus, in proceedings brought against a depositary, whether or not related to shares underlying ADSs, Russian courts may treat those underlying shares as the assets of the depositary, open to seizure or arrest. We do not know yet whether the shares underlying ADSs may be seized or arrested in Russian legal proceedings against a depositary. In the past a lawsuit has been filed against a depositary bank other than our depositary seeking the seizure of various Russian companies' shares represented by ADSs issued by that depositary. In the event that this type of suit were to be successful in the future, and the shares were to be seized or arrested, the ADS holders involved would lose their rights to the underlying shares.

***Your voting rights with respect to the shares represented by our ADSs are limited by the terms of the deposit agreement for our ADSs and relevant requirements of Russian law.***

You will be able to exercise voting rights with respect to the shares represented by ADSs only in accordance with the provisions of the deposit agreement relating to the ADSs and relevant requirements of Russian law. However, there are practical limitations upon your ability to exercise your voting rights due to the additional procedural steps involved in communicating with you. For example, our charter requires us to notify shareholders at least 30 days in advance of any meeting. Our shareholders will receive notice directly from us and will be able to exercise their voting rights by either attending the meeting in person or voting by power of attorney.

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As an ADS holder, you, by comparison, will not receive notice directly from us. Rather, in accordance with the deposit agreement, we will provide the notice to the depositary. The depositary has undertaken in turn, as soon as practicable thereafter, to mail to you the notice of such meeting, voting instruction forms and a statement as to the manner in which instructions may be given by holders. To exercise your voting rights, you must then instruct the depositary how to vote its shares. Because of this extra procedural step involving the depositary, the process for exercising voting rights may take longer for you than for holders of shares. ADSs for which the depositary does not receive timely voting instructions will not be voted at any meeting.

In addition, although securities regulations expressly permit the depositary to split the votes with respect to the shares underlying the ADSs in accordance with instructions from ADS holders, this regulation remains untested, and the depositary may choose to refrain from voting at all unless it receives instructions from all ADS holders to vote the shares in the same manner. You may thus have significant difficulty in exercising voting rights with respect to the shares underlying the ADSs.

### ***You may be unable to repatriate your earnings from our ADSs.***

Russian currency control legislation pertaining to payment of dividends provides that ruble dividends on common stock may be paid to the depositary or its nominee and converted into U.S. dollars by the depositary for distribution to owners of ADSs without restriction. Also, ADSs may be sold by non-residents of Russia for U.S. dollars outside Russia without regard to Russian currency control laws as long as the buyer is not a Russian resident.

Under the terms of the deposit agreement, there is no restriction on the sale of our ADSs to Russian residents. However, Russian currency control legislation effectively limits the ability of a non-resident of Russia to sell our ADSs to a Russian resident. Without a special license or a general banking license granted by the Central Bank, either of which is in practice difficult to obtain:

Russian legal entities must purchase securities for rubles and may not purchase foreign currency-denominated securities, such as our ADSs; and

Russian individuals may only purchase up to \$75,000 worth of such securities in one calendar year.

Moreover, sales of ADSs (as opposed to sales of underlying shares) to Russian residents may violate Russian securities laws. Accordingly, an ADS holder seeking to sell its holding to a Russian resident may in practice need first to withdraw the shares underlying its ADSs and establish a special ruble account to receive the proceeds from the sale of the shares. The repatriation of sale proceeds may be subject to significant costs and delays.

The ability of the depositary and other persons to convert rubles into U.S. dollars or another foreign currency is also subject to the availability of U.S. dollars or other foreign currency in Russia's currency markets. Although there is an existing market within Russia for the conversion of rubles into U.S. dollars and other foreign currencies, including the interbank currency exchange and over-the-counter and currency futures markets, the further development of this market is uncertain. At present, there is no market for the conversion of rubles into foreign currencies outside of Russia and no viable market in which to hedge ruble-currency and ruble-denominated investments.

### ***Future sales of common stock or ADSs may affect the market price of our common stock and ADSs.***

Sales, or the possibility of sales, of substantial numbers of shares of our common stock or ADSs in the public market, including the Russian stock market, could have an adverse effect on the market trading prices of the ADSs. Our subsequent equity offerings may reduce the percentage ownership of

our shareholders. Newly issued preferred stock may have rights, preferences or privileges senior to those of common stock.

***You may not be able to benefit from the United States-Russia double tax treaty.***

In accordance with Russian legislation, dividends paid to a nonresident holder generally will be subject to Russian withholding at a 15% rate for legal entities, and at the rate of 30% for individuals. This tax may be reduced to 5% to 10% under the United States-Russia income tax treaty for U.S. holders. However, the Russian tax rules applicable to U.S. holders are characterized by significant uncertainties and by an absence of interpretive guidance. Russian tax authorities have not provided any guidance regarding the treatment of ADS arrangements, and it is unclear how the Russian tax authorities will ultimately treat those arrangements. In particular, it is unclear whether Russian tax authorities will treat U.S. holders as the beneficial owners of the underlying shares for the purposes of the United States-Russia income tax treaty. If the Russian tax authorities were not to treat U.S. holders as the beneficial owners of the underlying shares, then the U.S. holders would not be able to benefit from the provisions of the United States-Russia double tax treaty.

***Capital gain from sale of ADSs may be subject to Russian income tax.***

Under Russian tax legislation, gains arising from the disposition of Russian shares and securities, such as our common stock, as well as financial instruments derived from such shares, such as our ADSs, may be subject to Russian income or withholding taxes. However, no procedural mechanism currently exists to withhold any capital gains or for subsequent remittance of such amounts to the Russian tax authorities with respect to sales made between non-residents or sales of ADSs on the New York Stock Exchange.

***Foreign judgments may not be enforceable against us.***

Our presence outside the United States may limit your legal recourse against us. We are incorporated under the laws of the Russian Federation. Substantially all of our directors and executive officers named in this document reside outside the United States. All or a substantial portion of our assets and the assets of our officers and directors are located outside the United States. As a result, you may not be able to effect service of process within the United States on us or on our officers and directors. Similarly, you may not be able to obtain or enforce U.S. court judgments against us, our officers and directors, including actions based on the civil liability provisions of the federal securities laws of the United States.

There is no treaty between the United States and the Russian Federation providing for reciprocal recognition and enforcement of foreign court judgments in civil and commercial matters. These limitations may deprive you of effective legal recourse for claims related to your investment in the ADSs. The deposit agreement provides for actions brought by any party thereto against us to be settled by arbitration in accordance with the Commercial Arbitration Rules of the American Arbitration Association, provided that any action under the U.S. federal securities laws or the rules or regulations promulgated thereunder may, but need not, be submitted to arbitration. The Russian Federation is a party to the United Nations (New York) Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards, but it may be difficult to enforce arbitral awards in the Russian Federation due to a number of factors, including the inexperience of Russian courts in international commercial transactions, official and unofficial political resistance to enforcement of awards against Russian companies in favor of foreign investors and Russian courts' inability to enforce such orders and corruption.

**Other Risks**

***We have not independently verified information regarding our competitors, nor have we independently verified official data from Russian government agencies.***

We have derived substantially all of the information contained in this document concerning our competitors from publicly available information, including press releases and filings under the U.S. securities laws, and we have relied on the accuracy of this information without independent verification.

In addition, some of the information contained in this document has been derived from official data of Russian government agencies. The official data published by Russian federal, regional and local governments are substantially less complete or researched than those of Western countries. Official statistics may also be produced on different bases than those used in Western countries. Any discussion of matters relating to Russia and Ukraine in this document must, therefore, be subject to uncertainty due to concerns about the completeness or reliability of available official and public information.

The veracity of some official data released by the Russian government may be questionable. In the summer of 1998, the Director of the Russian State Committee on Statistics and a number of his subordinates were arrested and charged with manipulating economic data to hide the actual output of various companies.

***Because no standard definition of a subscriber exists in the mobile telecommunications industry, comparisons between subscriber data of different companies may be difficult to draw.***

The methodology for calculation of subscriber numbers varies substantially in the mobile telecommunications industry, resulting in variances in reported subscriber numbers from that which would result from the use of a single methodology. Therefore, comparisons of subscriber numbers and churn between different mobile cellular communications companies may be difficult to draw.

**Corporate Governance**

The New York Stock Exchange permits us to follow certain home country corporate governance practices, which are different from those required under the New York Stock Exchange's Listing Standards for U.S. companies. The following table sets forth the differences between the New York Stock Exchange corporate governance requirements for U.S. companies under Listing Standard 303A and our current practices:

| NYSE Corporate Governance Rules for U.S. companies  | MTS' Corporate Governance Practices   |
|---|---|
| Majority directors are independent.<br>(Section 303A.01 and 02)   | We have seven directors, four of whom are affiliated with our largest shareholder and three of whom are affiliated with our second largest shareholder. Our President and Chief Executive Officer is a member of our board of directors, and the remaining directors are non-management directors.  |
| Non-management directors must meet at regular scheduled executive sessions without management.<br>(Section 303A.03)   | Non-management directors do not meet at regular scheduled sessions without management.  |
| Listed companies must have a nominating/corporate governance and a compensation committee, each composed entirely of independent directors and having a written charter specifying the committee's purpose and responsibilities, as well as annual performance evaluation of the committee.<br>(Section 303A.04 and 05) | These matters are considered by our entire board of directors.  |
| Listed companies must have an audit committee that satisfies the requirements of Rule 10A-3 under the Exchange Act.<br>(Section 303A.06)  | Our audit committee is comprised of two directors who are officers of our largest and second largest shareholders and one non-director who is an employee of our largest shareholder.<br><br>Our audit committee does not currently comply with Rule 10A-3. We intend to comply with this rule by July 31, 2005, when it comes into effect for foreign private issuers.<br><br>Our shareholders appoint our independent auditors at our annual general meeting as required by Russian law. This practice is not in violation of Rule 10A-3. |
| Audit committee must have a minimum of three members and have a written charter specifying the committee's purpose, an annual performance evaluation and its duties and responsibilities.<br>(Section 303A.07(a) and (c))   | Our audit committee is comprised of two directors who are officers of our largest and second largest shareholders and one non-director who is an employee of our largest shareholder, and functions pursuant to a written charter.  |
| Listed companies must have an internal audit function.<br>(Section 303A.07(d))  | As required by Russian law, we have a Review Commission that supervises our financial and operational activities. Members of the Review Commission are nominated and elected by our shareholders for a term of one year. A director may not simultaneously be a member of the Review Commission. We do not currently have a complete internal audit function.   |

**NYSE Corporate Governance Rules for U.S. companies**

**MTS' Corporate Governance Practices**

Shareholders must be given the opportunity to vote on all equity compensation plans and material revisions.  
(Section 303A.08)

Our charter requires the shareholders meeting to approve annual remuneration of board members.

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Listed companies must adopt and disclose corporate governance guidelines.  
(Section 303A.09)

We do not have formalized corporate governance guidelines outside of what is generally required by Russian law.

Listed companies must adopt and disclose a code of business conduct and ethics for directors, officers and employees, and promptly disclose any waivers of the code for directors or executive officers. (Section 303A.10)

We have adopted a Code of Ethics that applies to our senior officers, pursuant to SEC requirements.

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Please see our website at [www.mtsgsm.com](http://www.mtsgsm.com) for the latest version of this summary.



**SIGNATURES**

The registrant hereby certifies that it meets all of the requirements for filing on Form 20-F and that it has duly caused and authorized the undersigned to sign this amendment to the annual report on its behalf.

MOBILE TELESYSTEMS OJSC

/s/ Vassily V. Sidorov

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By: Vassily V. Sidorov  
Title: President and Chief Executive Officer

Date: June 25, 2004

QuickLinks

SIGNATURES