Telefónica Chooses IBM To Implement Its First-Ever Cloud-Native 5G Core Network Platform

- IBM collaborates with Telefónica to modernize Telefónica's 5G core network platform built with IBM Cloud Pak for Network Automation, Red Hat OpenShift and Juniper networking

- Telefónica's 5G core is designed to provide low latency, high bandwidth, and advanced network slicing, enabling Telefónica to fuel business transformation across industries

ARMONK, N.Y. and MADRID, Sept. 23, 2021 /PRNewswire/ -- IBM (NYSE:IBM) announced today a strategic multi-year agreement with Telefónica to use IBM intelligent automation software and services to implement UNICA Next – Telefónica's first-ever, cloud-native, 5G core network platform. With UNICA Next, Telefónica aims to acquire the agility, reliability, and efficiency to continuously optimize its services, now and in the future. As Telefónica and other Communications Service Providers (CSPs) around the world prepare for the benefits 5G and edge will bring to core network functions, Telefónica plans to have an open, secured, intelligent, and highly automated network that can power transformation for consumer and enterprise customers across all industries.

Telefónica has engaged IBM Global Business Services, a leading systems integrator and the digital transformation services and consultancy arm of IBM, Red Hat and Juniper networking to deploy the cloud-native platform. The platform is planned to be a new open-standard open-networking technology compliant platform that will be deployed across multiple central, regional, and distributed data centers offering low latency and high bandwidth, while able to deliver services in an agile manner. UNICA Next data centers are planned to be deployed starting in October 2021 and its scalable architecture is designed to address ETSI and other relevant industry standards.

The new network is built on IBM Cloud Pak for Network Automation, Red Hat OpenShift, and Juniper Networks Apstra and QFX

technology aligned to deliver streamlined end-to-end orchestration and operations. The platform will enable continuous improvements in deployment and management, including enabling new services that deliver enhanced customer value. The integration of IBM Cloud Pak for Network Automation software with UNICA Next allows for intent-driven orchestration supporting the end-to-end lifecycle management of different network cloud elements and network functions, including 5G core. Pairing it with the power of Red Hat Open Shift and Advanced Cluster Management for Kubernetes, the combination will present Telefónica with an environment designed for increased observability and control for managing the UNICA Next Kubernetes environment and drive 5G and edge innovation more quickly and with less complexity.

IBM Cloud Pak for Network Automation is AI-powered automation software designed to provide extreme automation, zero-touch provisioning, and closed loop operation capabilities.

These new capabilities will be engineered to allow Telefónica to more quickly deploy network services and new network functions, leveraging the IBM Cloud for Telecommunications partner ecosystem. Telefónica, as a pioneer in the adoption of open networks, has already deployed a live implementation using the IBM Cloud for Telecommunications in Europe and is continuing to innovate for their customers with speed and improved value.

"Building out the UNICA Next platform with its next-generation network architecture shows how important it is to build the infrastructure now to support the deployment of 5G. 5G has the potential to support thousands of use cases and applications for consumers and enterprises in all industries. Our collaboration will not only help us to harness the potential of 5G, but also prepare for the future through a hybrid-cloud led technology and business transformation. With IBM, Telefónica is combining the latency and bandwidth advancements of 5G with the customization and intelligence of the cloud: we anticipate the results will be transformative in Europe and beyond," said Javier Gutierrez, director of strategy, network, and IT development for Telefónica.

"We are proud to partner with Telefónica to reach this historic moment for the telecommunications industry in Europe," said Steve Canepa, managing director, IBM Global Communications Sector. "This implementation of Telefónica's cloud-native, 5G core network platform reflects IBM's significant investments in AI-powered automation software and the telco prime systems integration expertise required to deploy modern telecommunication networks – core, access, and edge. We are energized by the opportunity to enable Telefónica and all our clients to modernize their networks and enable new revenue-generating services that deliver tremendous value to consumer and enterprise customers."

IBM Global Telco Solutions Lab in Coppell, Texas, connected along with Telefónica's Network Cloud Lab in Madrid, will help accelerate UNICA Next's evolution by building new fully integrated releases using CI/CD methodology for ongoing life-cycle upgrades to the existing UNICA Next platform. By working with IBM in this way, Telefónica will be able to increase agility and data security and continue to innovate and transform, drawing on IBM's large network function ecosystem, Red Hat's vast ecosystem of certified partners, and Juniper's relationships with network function and hardware vendors.

Juniper is committed to bringing the power of open hybrid cloud architecture to clients around the world. As a member of the IBM Cloud for Telecommunications ecosystem, Juniper is proud to support IBM and Red Hat as they work with Telefónica to build and deploy a modern 5G network.

Statements regarding IBM's future direction and intent are subject to change or withdrawal without notice, and represent goals and objectives only.

About Telefónica

Telefónica is a leading telecommunications service provider globally. The company offers fixed and mobile connectivity, as well as a wide range of digital services for individual consumers and enterprises. Telefónica has 367 million clients spanning Europe and Latin America. Telefónica is a private company whose shares are listed as TEF on the Bolsa de Madrid, the New York Stock Exchange, and the Bolsa de Valores de Lima. https://www.telefonica.com/es/home

About IBM

To learn more about IBM Global Business Services, please visit: https://www.ibm.com/services

For more information about IBM Cloud Pak for Network Automation, please visit: https://www.ibm.com/cloud/cloud-pak-for-network-automation

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