

FRESNEL, A CABLE SHIP

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At first sight, the Fresnel looks like an unusually elegant factory ship. But what unravels from her stern is not the rope of a trawl net but cable. And not just any old cable, a fibre optic one. The first international telephone communications were made possible by the laying of a network of copper cables along the sea bed. Fibre optic technology has made cable more reliable and efficient in the long term than satellites. A number of ships, of which three belong to France Telecom (the Vercors, the Raymond Croze and the Leon Thevenin) have gone into service all around the world. Together, they are weaving an immense spider's web of fibre optic cables along the world's sea beds at depths of more than 1,000 metres.

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