



Media Release- 25 July 2006

## **ComReg re-designates eircom as Universal Service Provider from 2006 until 2010**

The Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg) has today issued its decision to re-designate eircom as the Universal Service Provider (USP) for a 4-year period to June 2010.

Universal Service ensures that every person can avail of basic fixed line services at an affordable price, no matter where they live in the State. Resulting from this decision, eircom's universal service obligations include:

- Meeting all reasonable requests for telephone lines to locations throughout the state,
- Provision of a telephone line capable of providing functional Internet access,
- Provision of a comprehensive telephone directory,
- Provision of public payphones to meet the reasonable needs of end-users.

Universal Service also provides for specific measures to ensure that services are affordable, and that consumers have facilities to enable them to exercise control over their telephony costs.

In its Consultation Document 06/16 which preceded this decision, ComReg drew attention to the fact that Broadband is currently specifically excluded from the definition of Universal Service. A recent review of Universal Service by the European Commission issued in 2006 maintained this exclusion.

ComReg notes among the submissions it received in the consultation period leading to today's decision included a detailed response from the National Disability Authority (NDA). While the decision ensures disabled users will have access to telephony services, ComReg will also establish a Forum to ensure the needs of disabled users are made known to all telecoms operators.

ComReg Commissioner, Mike Byrne said “ComReg is pleased to publish this decision to re-designate eircom as the universal service provider. In reaching this decision, ComReg was aware of eircom’s network presence throughout the country and its considerable experience in providing universal services. One of the key benefits of the Universal Service Obligation is social inclusion, as the USO provides services to help vulnerable users and those in remote and rural areas, whom the market might otherwise choose not to serve. These measures will help ensure that all consumers have access to telephony services at affordable prices. ComReg is grateful to all those who took time to make submissions during the course of the consultation.”

In line with its obligations, ComReg has obtained the consent of the Minister for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources to all the relevant aspects of this decision.

**ENDS**

**Issued By**

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