



Office of the Director of
**Telecommunications
Regulation**

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
25th January, 1999

REGULATOR SEEKS TO ENSURE VIBRANT COMPETITION FOR INTERNET ACCESS

Proposals for non-discriminatory access for Internet Service Providers (ISPs) were issued by the Director of Telecommunications Regulation, Etain Doyle today. The Regulator announced a full review of interconnection arrangements relating to Internet access to ensure vigorous and cost-effective competition in the growing internet market and proposed interim measures.

The Director is arranging this review in the light of the entry of new telecoms operators into the market since 1st December 1998 when full liberalisation of the telecoms industry occurred. The consultation document "**Interconnection services for calls destined for Internet Service Providers**" (ODTR 99/02) concludes that Telecom Éireann, as the only operator that has been designated as having Significant Market Power (SMP) on the relevant market, is required to provide non-discriminatory access to ISPs connected to its network.

It is proposed that Other Licensed Operators (OLO's) should provide an interconnect service for access to ISPs connected to their networks. Specific technical and commercial matters should be negotiated between the relevant parties in the first instance.

MORE

The ODTR will carry out a full review of the arrangements for 1891 Internet access and related interconnect arrangements and prices. The aim is to facilitate the development of competition and ensure the consumer reaps the benefits of that competition. Pending the result of the review, it is proposed that a transit charge should apply to calls destined for ISPs that are passed over interconnect links.

The Regulator's proposals are the first stage of a two-stage consultation process that the ODTR is holding on Internet access arrangements and related interconnection in Ireland. The first stage addresses the immediate issue of Internet access as an interconnect service under the present interconnection regime. The second stage of the consultation will deal with issues that require a longer time frame to analyse.

In view of the rapidly growing importance of the Internet, the Director is requesting initial responses from interested parties by the end of January. A more detailed consultation and review will be undertaken following initial responses.

The consultation document **ODTR 99/02** can be viewed on the ODTR web-site (<http://www.odtr.ie>). Comments on the interim measures proposed in this consultation by the Regulator are required by Friday 29th January with comments on the scope and inputs into a more detailed subsequent review are required by Monday 15th February.

ENDS