



Commission for
Communications Regulation

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Telcoms Market Showing Signs of Improvement

The final report on the telecoms sector in Ireland for 2002 shows the sector ending on a stronger note with an increase in revenues of 4%, and a 10% movement of customers from the incumbent to other fixed line operators in the last quarter. 162,000 Carrier Pre-Selection (CPS) lines are now rolled out. Overall revenues, as set out in the first ComReg quarterly report, stand now at €3.5 billion. Ireland also broke the 3 million threshold for the number of mobile phone subscribers in the third quarter of 2002. **ComReg Chairperson, Etain Doyle** said, 'After a tough year, it is good for the market and for users to see some encouraging signs, and I believe that we can build on these in 2003.'

An increasingly competitive environment is further underlined by the fact that one in four SMEs has switched their fixed line supplier in the last 12 months, accordingly to a new ComReg survey. DSL roll-out has proceeded quickly, but take up is limited with a further 700 lines since September 2002, making the total 1,900 lines, of which some 10% are non-incumbent lines. 25% of SMEs indicated that they are likely to upgrade from ISDN to DSL.

There has been a marked improvement in the delivery of leased lines by eircom to other operators. There is now a 20 to 25 day wait as opposed to a 36-43 day wait in October 2001, which in turn was a substantial improvement on 2000. These delivery times allow other operators to plan their operations with more certainty and deliver services to their customers on time.

Ireland's mobile penetration stands at 77% making it the 8th highest in Europe. Our mobile user population now sends, on average, 65 text messages per month – an increase of 55% since December 2001 and data revenues now form a substantial part of Irish mobile operators's turnover. Ireland retains its position as having the highest ARPU levels in the European Union at €44 per month compared with €39 in the September 2002 quarterly report reflecting a 13% increase.

24% of all TV households now subscribe to digital TV with BSkyB accounting for 255,000 subscribers.

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