



Media Release- 30 May 2006

ComReg calls on all sides to re-engage in Industry Forum to facilitate progress on Local Loop Unbundling

ComReg has today issued an Information Notice on the status of developments relating to Local Loop Unbundling (LLU). The ComReg document outlines the key milestones that are necessary to advance the LLU process which is critical to broadband availability.

LLU is a critical component in ensuring that consumers are provided with a wide choice of innovative and keenly-priced broadband services. LLU is central to achieving these aims, as well as contributing to the wider aim of developing Ireland's economic competitiveness.

ComReg has called eircom and operators to a meeting on Wednesday, 31st May 2006 to move the outstanding issues forward.

While eircom and other operators have been working together in recent months to progress outstanding LLU issues, the other operators considered that eircom's resultant proposals fell below their requirements. With a view to resolving these outstanding matters between the parties, ComReg has been meeting with the parties over the past number of weeks to develop a programme to address the key issues, incorporating the following milestones:

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| 31 May 06 | Meeting convened by ComReg for eircom and other operators to resume progress on LLU issues |
| 19 June 06 | eircom to permit operators to decide the method by which broadband is delivered when customers are taking calls and line rental from other operators |
| 31 July 06 | ComReg to identify next steps around enabling customers to switch products and services seamlessly |
| 8 August 06 | An interim product to be available to allow customers to keep their existing phone number when changing broadband supplier |

8 August 06

Commence development of a long-term solution to permit customers to keep their existing phone number when changing broadband supplier

ComReg proposes to issue monthly public updates on progress on the above issues.

ComReg Commissioner, John Doherty stated “While Ireland’s adoption of broadband is gaining momentum rapidly, LLU remains a key catalyst for broadband supply and demand. ComReg now expects all operators to work together on this important programme. While I welcome the progress that has been made over the past four weeks, ComReg intends to monitor progress on all the agreed areas in the coming weeks and is prepared to intervene robustly, if necessary.”

Notes

- There are currently 330,000 broadband subscribers in Ireland, with take-up increasing by 114% in the past 12 months
- LLU is a key catalyst in growing broadband and has been instrumental in high take-up of broadband in several countries, notably Sweden, UK, France, Norway and Finland
- 70% of broadband subscribers in Ireland are from Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) technology. While progress (as outlined above) is being made on LLU, ComReg welcomes the provisions of the proposed Electronic Communications Bill and new co-competition powers to assist in addressing outstanding LLU challenges
- The availability of alternative platforms (e.g. wireless and cable) is also a key enabler of broadband development and competition. 30% of broadband subscribers in Ireland are from access technologies other than DSL, up from 15% in May 2005. This facilitates genuine choice for consumers in terms of broadband offerings
- In the short-term, key challenges to drive consumer demand for broadband include increasing business and consumer awareness of the benefits of broadband and stimulating the take-up of PC ownership and Internet usage through encouraging content and application creation.

ENDS

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