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ComReg publishes review of framework for Voice over Internet telephone services

The Commission for Communications Regulation today published the outcome of its review of the existing framework for Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) telephone services which was opened with its publication in 2004 of ComReg 04/103.

VoIP enables enhanced competition in the business market, and greater choice for consumers. ComReg is keen to facilitate innovative services such as VoIP, to bring benefits to Irish consumers.

ComReg therefore undertook a review of progress to date, particularly seeking to establish whether any further measures were needed to encourage growth of VoIP and the enhanced services it can provide. As part of that process ComReg commissioned a study by Analysys Consulting, which relied on a series of interviews with key industry players. In addition, ComReg carried out a formal consultation process that posed a series of key questions to readers on their experiences to date. Today's publication of document ComReg 06/45 describes the results of this, including ComReg's conclusions on the present status of VoIP.

ComReg chairperson Isolde Goggin said "We have taken a light-handed approach to regulating VoIP, to minimise the possible barriers to entry and provide as flexible an environment as possible, while ensuring that consumers are protected. For instance, we opened up access to telephone numbers for Service Providers (SPs) of VoIP, with both traditional geographic numbers as well as a new range of "076" numbers being made available. This enabled VoIP Service Providers (SPs) to move from offering services that were limited to those devices with IP addresses, allowing interconnection with the traditional PSTN world."

Overall, ComReg found that industry is very satisfied with the progress of VoIP to date and with the steps that have been taken so far. Various concerns or risks were mentioned (e.g. the danger of arbitrage on VoIP pricing) and ComReg will continue to monitor these and all facets of VoIP development in Ireland and elsewhere, as its capabilities and penetration grow over the next few years.

ENDS

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