



Media Release- 16 March 2004

## **ComReg Quaterly Report survey shows home Internet penetration at almost 50%**

The Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg) today published its latest quarterly report – the last quarter of 2003 - which highlights a number of important developments in the communications sector. These include:

- Home internet penetration has reached almost 50%, an increase of 5% from the previous quarter
- Of those who use the internet at home, 1 in 5 said they used it daily, while almost 40% said they used it several times per week.

The survey was undertaken by Amarách Consulting on behalf of ComReg.

The internet survey findings are supported by the continued strong uptake in FRIACO and DSL lines which are detailed in ComReg's quarterly report. FRIACO subscribers have increased from 30,000 last quarter to 40,000 at the end of December 2003, with indications that current take-up levels exceed 1,600 per week. DSL has also increased significantly from approx 13,000 to almost 26,000 at the end of December 2003. Take-up levels for DSL lines currently exceed 1,400 per week.

ComReg also published its residential survey, conducted by TNS mrbi, which shows both a growing awareness of competitive alternatives for fixed line services and take-up rates. These include

- 2 in 3 of those surveyed were approached by an alternative operator in the past 12 months.
- CPS lines account for 14% of all fixed lines.
- 18% of respondents used an operator other than eircom for their fixed telephony services, with 1 in 4 of respondents switching back to eircom from competitors in the past twelve months.

ComReg said that the Telecoms Sector accounts for approximately 3.5% of GNP with an estimated yearly turnover of €3.62 billion. Total revenues for fixed, mobile and broadcasting sectors are up 5% since 2002. Mobile penetration now stands at 87%, up 4% since the last quarter with all operators increasing subscribers. Text messaging continues to grow, with each mobile subscriber sending on average 82 messages each month - up from 78 last quarter.

Mobile ARPU has increased by €1 to €47 which is 52% higher than the EU average. Consumers have also taken advantage of the opportunity provided by Mobile Number Portability with over 80,000 subscribers having ported their mobile number since its introduction in July 2003.

ComReg reported that 50% of all pay-TV households were now digital subscribers, with Cable/MMDS companies increasing their percentage share of the digital market to 26%.

Tariff comparison data published as part of the quarterly report shows that Ireland has improved to 5<sup>th</sup> cheapest in the EU for residential fixed telephony services. The comparison takes into account recent line rental increases from eircom. Although, the ranking for business fixed telephony has fallen by one place.

Commenting on the latest Quarterly Report, ComReg Chairperson, John Doherty said: "The higher levels of internet take-up and usage are encouraging for continued flat rate and DSL adoption. ComReg welcomes the recent further reductions in DSL prices that has moved Ireland from one of the most expensive locations for DSL to one where some service providers are offering packages with DSL at a price of €30 per month. We now have one of the most competitive markets for DSL in Europe. We would like to see the continued marketing of DSL coupled with critically important demand initiatives throughout 2004 and beyond".

All of the documents relating to the quarterly report are available on the ComReg website – [www.comreg.ie](http://www.comreg.ie)

They are as follows:

|                          |                        |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Market Commentary Report | - <b>ComReg 04/30a</b> |
| Key Data Report          | - <b>ComReg 04/30b</b> |
| Residential survey       | - <b>ComReg 04/30c</b> |
| Internet survey          | - <b>ComReg 04/30d</b> |

**ENDS**

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