



Media Release- 30 June, 2010

ComReg re-designates Eircom as Universal Service Provider from 2010 until 2012

The Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg) has today issued its decision to re-designate Eircom as the Universal Service Provider (USP) for a 2-year period to June 2012.

ComReg's aim with regard to universal service is to ensure that basic telephony services are available at an affordable price to all end-users in the State. ComReg notes that Directive 2002/22/EC of the European Parliament was amended by Directive 2009/136/EC ("Amending Directive") and notified in the Official Journal on 18 December 2009.¹ The Amending Directive must be transposed into Irish law by 24 May 2011.

ComReg's approach to universal service scope and designation, in its Decision issued today, is in accordance with the European Communities (Electronic Communications Networks and Services) (Universal Service and Users Rights) Regulations 2003 ("the Regulations"). Resulting from this Decision, Eircom's universal service obligations include:

- Provision of access at a fixed location
- Provision of a printed telephone directory and the maintenance of the National Directory Database (NDD)
- Provision of public pay phones
- Provision of services to consumers with disabilities
- Provision of measures to assist consumers control their expenditure

ComReg notes that broadband is not currently included the definition of universal service under the current legislation. Accordingly, this designation refers only to narrowband connections.

For consumers with disabilities, the Amending Directive will further enhance the choice of both access and services from the range of electronic communication services available to all consumers. ComReg will also continue its work in its Forum on Electronic Communications Services for People with Disabilities, and will take account of relevant consumer surveys conducted in this regard.

¹ Directive 2002/22/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 March 2002 on universal service and users' rights relating to electronic communications networks and services (Universal Service Directive) as amended by Directive 2009/136/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2009

ComReg Commissioner, Mike Byrne said “*ComReg is pleased to publish this decision to re-designate Eircom as the universal service provider. In reaching this decision, ComReg was aware of Eircom’s network presence throughout the country and its experience in providing universal services. The provision of Universal Service ensures that basic telephone services are available at an affordable price and specified quality, irrespective of geographic location, within Ireland. There are both social and economic grounds for the USO, as it provides services to assist vulnerable users and those in remote locations that the market may not choose to serve. ComReg is grateful to all those who took time to make submissions during the course of the consultation.*”

In line with its obligations, ComReg obtained the consent of the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources to all the relevant aspects of this Decision. Finally, ComReg’s Information Notice (ComReg10/45) gives details of ComReg’s approach to the provision of universal services, thereby providing a solid framework that ensures the continuation of a quality universal service in the State.

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