



## **ComReg Sets Timetable for FRIACO**

ComReg has put in place the next steps enabling consumers to have access to flat rate, predictable internet access charges.

In a Decision Notice issued today ComReg have set out a detailed timescale to be met so that operators can order a wholesale FRIACO (Flat Rate Internet Access Call Origination) product by end February 2003. This will enable the provision of a retail offering by operators no later than the end of June 2003. From that date, operators, including eircom, who wish to supply a flat rate internet access offering to the public will be in a position to do so, as the full arrangements including network, processes and costs of availing of the wholesale product will be in place.

Following requests from a number of operators in July 2002 for a FRIACO service, eircom engaged in a series of bi-lateral discussions until November 2002. To assist in expediting the process ComReg then established a special forum which further assisted in developing the product in line with that available in many other countries across Europe. However in view of increasing demands for a flat rate offering from consumers and because of a number of technical and commercial constraints ComReg have now intervened to formalise the definition of the product description and to set out a timetable for its introduction on a phased basis. ComReg envisages the development of other FRIACO products in the future.

The programme set out now is in line with the thinking set out by the Minister for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources in his draft policy direction of December 2002. Building on the momentum that this initiative brings, ComReg looks forward to working with the industry to meet the demands of the consumer by making a FRIACO product a reality in Ireland.

**ENDS**

**Issued By**

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