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ComReg starts consultation for review of key communications markets

The Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg) has started a range of consultations on the levels of competition in key electronic communications markets. Under EU regulations, ComReg is obliged to assess the levels of effective competition in key mobile, fixed and broadcasting markets. If it finds that certain operators have Significant Market Power (SMP), ComReg may impose regulatory obligations on such operators.

ComReg has launched consultations on wholesale broadcasting transmission charges; wholesale mobile voice call termination and the national wholesale market for international roaming.

On broadcasting, ComReg's preliminary conclusions, which are open to national consultation, indicate that RTE Networks are dominant in the transmission of analogue terrestrial TV and analogue terrestrial radio. Subject to consultation, ComReg is proposing to oblige RTE Networks to operate in a transparent and non-discriminatory fashion in these markets.

In terms of mobile voice call termination, ComReg has found that all 4 mobile networks have dominance in the termination of voice calls on their network. ComReg is consulting on a variety of obligations including cost orientation, transparency and non-discrimination. Vodafone and O2 already have obligations as existing SMP operators. However, ComReg is proposing - when considering imposing obligations - to take into account the relative stage of market development of the smaller operators and is proposing to impose limited obligations on 3G operators.

ComReg is also consulting on the wholesale national market for international roaming and concludes that it is dependent on data from other European regulators to complete this analysis. This market relates to the rates charged by Irish operators to other operators whose customers are roaming in Ireland. ComReg is proposing to co-ordinate with other European regulators to expedite this market review. In addition, ComReg will also assist other regulators with information from the Irish market (relating to the rates charged by foreign operators to Irish operators whose customers roam abroad) where appropriate.

All draft SMP decisions, following national consultations, are subject to further review by the EU Commission before they are finally adopted.

The full consultation documents (ComReg 03/126, 03/127, 03/128) related to the above matters are available on the ComReg website www.comreg.ie

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Issued By

Tom Butler

Public Affairs Manager, ComReg

Ph: 01 804 9639 Mobile: 087 2536358

tom.butler@comreg.ie