



## **New Authorisations replacing Communications Licences**

The Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg) today issued the text of the General Authorisation for the provision of communications networks and services. The document sets out the conditions which communications network and service providers must meet.

From 25 July the basis for providing communications services will change as a result of EU Directives. It will no longer be necessary for operators to obtain a licence (except in cases where the use of scarce spectrum is involved). Instead there will be a general right to provide such services subject to compliance with standardised conditions. The paper issued today provides the text for these conditions.

The paper also indicates the intended approach regarding broadcast distribution services to end users. ComReg has stated that such services (cable, MMDS and satellite) should be subject to the same conditions applying to any other communications service. However, in view of the lack of clarity surrounding the issue, ComReg has decided that it shall not provide, for the time being, for the regulation of such services under the new framework. This would mean that customers of television networks would not enjoy the same rights as customers of voice or data services.

ComReg would support additional legislation to address users' rights in respect of these services. It will continue to deal with customer issues under the existing framework. The paper also provides for the authorisation of broadcasting distribution networks and wholesale services which are more clearly defined in the new Directives.

A General Authorisation is concerned only with standard conditions which apply to all operators. Under other features of the EU Directives, special provisions may apply in the case of operators with Significant Market Power, in order to develop competition. Special conditions will also apply in the case of operators designated with a Universal Service Obligation. Likewise, operators using spectrum are subject to specific conditions set out in their licences.

Commenting on the General Authorisation conditions, Etain Doyle, Chairperson of ComReg said "The publication of the text of the Authorisation conditions today provides operators and users with information on the basic ground rules which will apply to the provision of services. The authorisations will be finalised when the legislation, currently being prepared by the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources, is adopted".

**ENDS**

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