



Office of the Director of
**Telecommunications
Regulation**

PRESS RELEASE

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TELECOMMUNICATIONS REGULATOR INITIATES REVIEW ON SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS BETWEEN OPERATORS

The Director of Telecommunications Regulation, Etain Doyle, today initiated a review of the service levels to be offered by Telecom Éireann to other telecommunications operators. The service level agreements between Telecom Éireann and other licensed operators (OLO's) will set out the terms and conditions under which other operators can buy services from Telecom Éireann.

Launching a new consultation paper on the subject, the Regulator stated that “the issues being addressed by the consultation paper are another important element in maximising the effectiveness of the newly liberalised telecommunications market. The establishment of a level playing field for the Other Licensed Operators in Ireland is essential if the market is to function properly. A key issue in this development of the market is the treatment of competitors by Telecom Éireann.”

She added that “It is a principle of EU and Irish telecommunications legislation that an operator like Telecom Éireann who has been designated as having significant market power (SMP)¹ must provide access to its networks and services in a non-discriminatory fashion. It is part of my responsibilities to ensure that this is in place in the Irish telecommunications market.”

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In many cases, before a licensed operator can offer a retail service to its customers, it needs to buy in some of the components of the service from Telecom Éireann. For example, a new operator may need to lease a local connection from Telecom Éireann in order to connect its

¹ Note

- Significant Market Power (SMP) denotes an operator which holds at least a 25% market share of a relevant telecommunications market. In Ireland, Telecom Éireann is the only operator designated in the fixed telecommunications market.

customer to the new operator's network. These types of services, known as carrier services, are bought by operators from Telecom Éireann and are especially important in the early years after liberalisation when new operators are still developing their own networks. The quality and consistency of service provided by Telecom Éireann has a major impact on the quality and consistency of service others can provide.

Ireland needs to benchmark against international standards and to deliver an equivalent or better service to ensure development of the sector and related industries. The Director wishes to ensure that Telecom Éireann provides new operators with the same quality of carrier services, under the same terms and conditions, as it does to Telecom Éireann's own retail arm. The minimum set of Service Level Agreements proposed in this consultation paper state, amongst other things; the delivery timeframes, quality levels and maintenance terms for services provided by Telecom Éireann to OLOs.

The Director stated that "the ability of operators to compete effectively in the highly competitive telecommunications market is, in part, dependent on the nature of the service level agreements available from Telecom Éireann. This review gives these operators an opportunity to shape the future form of these agreements."

ODTR 99/27 - "Service Levels Provided to Other Licensed Operators by Licensees with Significant Market Power – Consultation Paper" can be viewed on the ODTR web-site (<http://www.odtr.ie>). The consultation period concludes on 11th June, 1999.

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