

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FTTH Council Europe welcomes the European Commission's NGA Recommendation and Broadband Strategy

The FTTH Council Europe believes that the future needs of broadband users and the delivery of faster and greener economic growth can only be met by bringing fibre directly to the subscriber.

Brussels, 20 September 2010 - The FTTH Council Europe welcomes the European Commission's recent publications, which seek to encourage public and private investment in fast and ultra fast networks. The digital economy has many facets but fundamental is the need for users to have access to the necessary networks. The need for a Fibre to the Home solution relates to the realistic future needs of end users in terms of capacity and is entirely consistent with the need for technological neutrality.

NGA Recommendation

The FTTH Council Europe is pleased to see the NGA Recommendation released as there is now a certainty regarding the regulatory direction. The Council believes that a competitive market will drive investment and deployment in FTTH. Where it is feasible, competition based on access to passive infrastructures offers all operators the ability to make NGA investments and is the best mechanism for ensuring an appropriate and timely NGA deployment. While the NGA Recommendation makes other remedies readily available, there is recognition of the primacy of infrastructure-based competition at its heart and this is very welcomed. The FTTH Council Europe believes that the guidance on sharing passive infrastructures is also very important.

FTTH Council Europe President Chris Holden said: "Giving regulated access to non-replicable passive infrastructures creates the possibility for any operator to initiate network deployment and this can start a competitive dynamic that may stimulate other operators to make their own investments in NGA.

Hartwig Tauber FTTH Council Europe Director General added: "The EU has quoted some very large numbers for roll out costs. The largest single component of those costs is civil engineering works, so intelligent use and sharing of existing assets can lower costs considerably. A common regulatory approach which put effective regulation in place can be a major contributor to deploying FTTH networks."

Broadband Strategy

One of the key advantages of FTTH over other solutions is the upload speeds. The Council is pleased to see that the Commission's broadband strategy recognises the importance of upload speeds.

In order to facilitate deployment, much of the co-ordination work that is necessary to enable effective sharing of passive infrastructures needs to happen now, ahead of network deployment. The FTTH Council Europe is pleased to see that the broadband strategy recognises the role of public authorities in order to co-ordinate investors and to give a clear understanding when and where the market will rely on competing infrastructures, where it will be a single commercially deployed infrastructure and where public finance may be available. Calling for Member States to develop a national broadband plan is the key to making this a reality.

The FTTH Council Europe believes that Member States must be clear in their broadband plans where they expect the market to deliver by itself, where they will co-ordinate and assist (maybe through Public Private Partnership) and where there will only be one network deployed, clearly setting out the access conditions which will apply to that network in advance. The level of co-ordination required between planning agencies, investors, regulators etc. are such that a new National Agency to co-ordinate projects could be considered.

FTTH Council President Chris Holden said: ‘ Personally I’m really pleased that upload speeds are starting to be recognised for their importance and I think the Commission’s role as assessor-in-chief of national broadband plans is really important and shows a determination to meet the targets that have been set. However, these broadband targets are really just a minimum and I hope Member States will be setting even more ambitious targets and concrete operational measures to achieve them in their high speed broadband plans.’

Hartwig Tauber, FTTH Council Europe Director General added: “The FTTH Council Europe see the national broadband plans as a great opportunity to set out a vision at national level and to put enablers in place. The FTTH Council Europe will work with all the stakeholders to advise and enable in any way we can.”

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About The FTTH Council Europe:

The FTTH Council Europe is an industry organisation with a mission to accelerate the availability of fibre-based, ultra-high-speed access networks to consumers and businesses. The Council promotes this technology because it will deliver a flow of new services that enhances the quality of life, contributes to a better environment and increased economic competitiveness. The FTTH Council Europe consists of more than 140 member companies. www.ftthcouncil.eu

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