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**FTTH Council Europe**  
 Feb 27-28, 2008  
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### FTTH/B subscribers top 1 million in Europe

*But marketing problems contribute to slow take-up*

by Ken Wieland  
 Fri. February 29, 2008

IDATE, a France-based research and consultancy firm, shared its latest bunch of FTTH/B (Fiber-to-the-Home/Building) statistics at the FTTH Council Europe conference in Paris.

At first glance, the numbers are encouraging. At the end of 2007 IDATE calculates they were just over one million FTTH/B subscribers in EU 31 (EU27 plus Norway, Iceland, Switzerland and Andorra), which represents 23 percent growth compared with 12 months previously.

The number of homes and buildings passed by fiber grew much faster over the same period, however, reaching 4.9 million (a 79 percent increase).

Compared with the U.S. and Japan, though, Europe still lags well behind. The U.S. had 2 million FTTH/B subscribers at the end of 2007, while Japan had 11 million.

And scratching below the surface of the European figures, worrying patterns still persist for those wishing for extensive and pan-European deployment. The majority of FTTH/B subscribers (86 percent), for example, are still concentrated in five countries (Sweden, Italy, Norway, the Netherlands and Denmark).

What's more, it is still municipalities and utilities that account for most of the new FTTH/B activity. Since mid-2005 there have been 88 new FTTH/B initiatives, and municipalities and utilities accounted for 61 percent of those.

However, IDATE reports that altnets are becoming much more prominent of late and now account for around half of FTTH/B subscribers in Europe. Moreover, 60 percent of homes and buildings in EU31 are passed with fiber courtesy of the altnets. Municipalities and utilities account for 25 percent of homes and buildings passed.

As the major operators in Europe, apart from France Telecom, Iliad, Telekom Slovenia and Orange (in Slovakia), have yet to make any significant push on FTTH/B, growth has been patchy and generally subdued.

Other than regulatory concerns that the Tier 1 operators might have about hefty

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