

## Growth in FTTH/B slows across Europe

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The popularity of FTTH/B broadband technology with telcos and subscribers in Europe waned last year, new figures from the FTTH Council Europe have revealed.

The number of homes in the European Union passed with FTTH/B increased 13 percent in the first nine months of 2015 to 57.8 million, while the number of subscribers rose 23 percent to 15.4 million.

Although the figures are only to September – France-based think tank iDATE who compiled the results said Q4 figures had not been verified yet – they represent a marked slowdown in growth from the proceeding 12 months.

Subscriber growth between 2014 and 2015 was 60 percent, while deployments increased by 49 percent with the FTTH Council saying the tech was set for mass market adoption.

That rhetoric has toned down, with FTTH Council Europe President Edgar Aker talking instead of “continued structural growth”.

iDATE’s Valerie Chaillou said she was not expecting the needle to move significantly once figures for the last three months of the year were included.

If the nine months figures were extrapolated to 12 months at a constant rate, deployments would increase 16 percent and subscribers numbers would grow 31 percent – still substantially down on 2014 growth rates.

Germany made the ranking for the first time last year, but that means that the ratio of subscribers who have signed up is just one percent of the total number of households.

Growth in Europe’s biggest economy was not thanks to telcos, however.

The FTTH Council said fibre projects there were being led by municipalities and private players.

Poland and Croatia also made the ranking for the first time, but the UK remains below the one percent threshold having added just 26,000 subscribers.

Austria, Ireland and Belgium were also singled out for “holding back” on fibre.

Lithuania, Latvia and Sweden again topped the rankings.

Spain once again added the most subscribers – around one million – followed by France with just over half that figure.

Those two countries also came top in terms of the number of homes passed.

Aker said: “The year 2015 has seen continued structural growth in fibre rollout throughout Europe, confirming the trend already observed in 2014.

“We feel that the European Commission now tends to favour the development of a more “fibre friendly” environment.

“It is indeed important to stress the endorsement of fibre broadband by local policy makers, but also the increase in public-private partnerships.”