

# Bright future of FTTH

**Why is the next FTTH Conference held in Luxembourg? How important is cooperation with politicians? What impact do the children have on the future of ICT? All these questions have been touched in the interview with Nadia Babaali- Communications Director of FTTH Council Europe.**

**On the 4th of November we were celebrating the third edition of the Gimme Fibre Day. Where comes this idea from and what were the results of this edition?**

At the very beginning, the concept of celebrating fibre to the home on 4 November emerged in 2012 within the FTTH Council Global Alliance, the platform for cooperation of the five global FTTH Councils. The idea was to honour the only future-proof broadband access solution on the market and showcase how fibre has positively impacted communities across the world and what policymakers can do to help advance the roll-out of fiber optics. They chose the specific date of 4 November in order to commemorate the birthday of Sir Charles Kuen Kao, Nobel Prize in Physics for ground-breaking achievements in the transmission of light in fibres for optical communication.

We can proudly say that this third edition of Gimme Fibre Day has been a worldwide success and we are very happy that this event is getting more and more attention and support every year. More than 20 activities to mark the occasion were listed on our website, not to mention the many spontaneous actions throughout the world showing support for Gimme Fibre Day. We also organised a Facebook Selfie Contest "I want Fibre". The lucky winner, Fabien from Austria, won an iPad mini 4.

Also, France has been a strong advocate of fibre to the home (FTTH) this year, and this was reflected in the activities occurring around "La journée de la Fibre", the French edition of Gimme Fibre Day. For this occasion, we collaborated with the French operator Orange to organise online activities on social media and on the French Gimme Fibre Day website.

**Three months after the Gimme Fibre Day, there will be annual FTTH Conference held in Luxembourg. What are the objectives of this edition?**

It is rapidly approaching indeed! We are really excited about this 13th edition of the FTTH Conference. This year, we decided to hold it in Luxembourg City from 16 to 18 February 2016. This event is the perfect opportunity to learn more about every aspect of FTTH, FTTH equipment and FTTH services.

The FTTH Conference 2016 has been placed under the theme "Calling for a brighter future" because we strongly believe that fibre is a future-proof solution that will simplify and improve the way we communicate. In fact, our event totally reflects the FTTH Council Europe's objectives to

create a connected continent and provide a brighter future for all citizens through fibre to the home roll-out. We are calling on policymakers, regulators, operators – both new and incumbent – and end users to attend this conference as we believe that the only infrastructure solution for the coming years is fibre.

We want this conference to be a place of exchange about FTTH-related topics concerning financing, deployment, marketing and services, as well as looking at the state of the market in Europe and inspiring case studies. Central and Western Europe will be a key area of focus during the three-day event, including a day of workshops and the two-day conference.

**Why did you choose The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg to host the FTTH Conference 2016?**

Our FTTH Conference has been held in a different European city since 2004. Choosing the right location is a crucial matter for us. On this topic, a lot is happening right now in Luxembourg. There is a high penetration of fibre in this country and a high engagement and support of politicians regarding this issue. Luxembourg is also one of the decision taking centres of the European Union and host to a number of services of the European Commission such as the European Court of Auditors, European Court of Justice, European Investment Bank (EIB), European Investment Fund and Secretariat of the European Parliament. We are also very pleased with the involvement of the Luxembourg Government for our FTTH Conference: the event has received the high patronage of Xavier Bettel, Prime Minister and Minister for Communications and Media of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. Xavier Bettel will also deliver the opening speech of the FTTH Conference, officially kicking off the largest FTTH-related event in the world!

**The FTTH Council Europe seems indeed strongly involved in the work of lobbying regulators and politicians. Can you explain why and how do you take part in those discussions?**

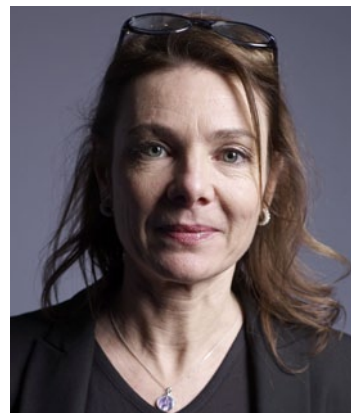
In line with our strategy to accelerate adoption of FTTH in Europe, we are asking decision makers and other stakeholders to create a favourable environment for fibre roll-out. Decisions regarding a European regulatory framework for fibre rollout need to be made today. In this context, it is only logical that at the heart of our organisation lies the strategy to reach and influence politicians and regulators throughout Europe. Governments cannot be expected to have the technological know-how

required to find all the answers. This is where we are convinced that the FTTH Council Europe can bring ideas and solutions that can work for all Europe: we have access to a huge amount of information and studies, and also have the insights to analyse this information from different angles: regulatory, technological, business...

As a consequence, we have high level discussions with the Commission and Parliament. For example, we are exchanging with Günther H. Oettinger, Commissioner for the Digital Economy and Society, and Andrus Ansip, VP for the Digital Single Market on the Digital Agenda. Our president Edgar Aker also met Luxembourg Prime Minister Xavier Bettel on 23 September 2016 to discuss the roll-out of FTTH in the Luxembourg's broadband market and exchange views on the Digital Lëtzebuerg initiative. Our connections are very good and we influence and discuss with them quite openly. We are being acknowledged as one of the parties that can bring a good view from the telecoms industry.

**Finally, on occasion of the FTTH Conference 2016, the FTTH Council Europe will make a donation to CoderDojo. Why have you decided to support this association?**

We are very pleased to donate 3,500 euros to the Coder Dojo Foundation, a global initiative of free, volunteer-led, community-based programming clubs for young people. This association is a great example of the digital empowerment of kids. At the FTTH Council Europe we promote FTTH-enabled services and their positive impact on the quality of life of European citizens so it is only natural that we support such an initiative. Children are our future, it is our responsibility to build the right environment for them to grow and develop. Of course, besides the mere donation, we will continue to explore new cooperation opportunities in the near future, for which we are pretty excited about! ■



**Nadia  
Babaali**

**Communications Director  
FTTH Council Europe**