

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FTTH Council Europe welcomes European Commission's plans to accelerate roll-out of next generation access networks

The new European Digital Agenda confirms FTTH Council Europe's position of the need to accelerate the roll-out of fibre-based networks in Europe. Fibre access networks will provide the higher speeds requested by the European Commission and can facilitate even higher speeds.

BRUSSELS, 21 May 2010: The FTTH Council Europe welcomes the New Digital Agenda of the European Commission, recently presented by Commissioner Kroes. The document requests speeds of above 100Mbps for at least 50% of the European households by 2020. It also outlines a clear commitment to ensure an investment-friendly environment, which should accelerate the roll-out of fibre-based networks, recognizing Europe is still lagging behind some of our main international counterparts in Fibre to the Home penetration.

"The European Digital Agenda is a first step in the right direction", comments Chris Holden, President of the FTTH Council Europe, "by setting a clear bandwidth target, the European Commission clearly supports the roll-out of future-proof networks that offer more than 100 Mbps to each customer. This will ensure that Europe's citizens will benefit from the new applications and services that require high-speed Internet connections. These include entertainment services like 3D-HD TV and online gaming as well as new business applications such as teleworking and video communications, care for elderly people and numerous other services that will have a positive impact on the economy and society. Since FTTH networks can offer even higher bandwidth than that requested by the European Commission, we feel strongly supported in our position by the European Digital Agenda".

"While we applaud the clear commitment to accelerate the roll-out of NGA networks we still see a lot of challenges to ensure the proper implementation of the objectives of the Digital Agenda", adds Hartwig Tauber, Director General of the FTTH Council Europe. "The document requests 30Mbps bandwidth for each European household and at least 100Mbps for 50% of households by 2020. We have to ensure that these numbers will be guaranteed speeds and not just "up to" offerings. It will also be necessary for high speeds to be available in both directions: download and upload. The digital economy will be based on an active information exchange that not only consists of downloading data and content from the Internet."

The FTTH Council Europe promotes high-speed FTTH networks that offer sufficient bandwidth for both directions while also providing the necessary quality of service to implement critical services like video transmission or the real time control of intelligent power grids.

Chris Holden concludes: "We will continue our efforts to communicate the advantages of FTTH networks. As the Digital Agenda gives high responsibility to the Member States and their national regulatory authorities, we will support them to create an investment-friendly environment that will allow accelerated roll-out of FTTH networks and avoid any kind of digital divide. The Digital Agenda

will support us in our mission and we look forward to working with the European Institutions to achieve this goal."

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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 130 member companies.

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