

France joins the leading Global FTTH economies!

France is the largest European economy to enter the FTTH Ranking, with 308,000 households connected with fibre at the end of December 2009

BRUSSELS, 24 February 2010 – The Fibre to the home Council Europe today revealed that France has become the largest European economy to join the fibre-to-the-home (FTTH) Ranking. To gain entry to this exclusive club, more than 1 % of households in the country must have a fibre-to-the-home or fibre-to-the-building (FTTB) connection.

In absolute figures, France now has the second largest FTTH subscriber base in Europe. Out of a total of more than 25 million households, 308,000 are enjoying a fibre connection direct to the home.

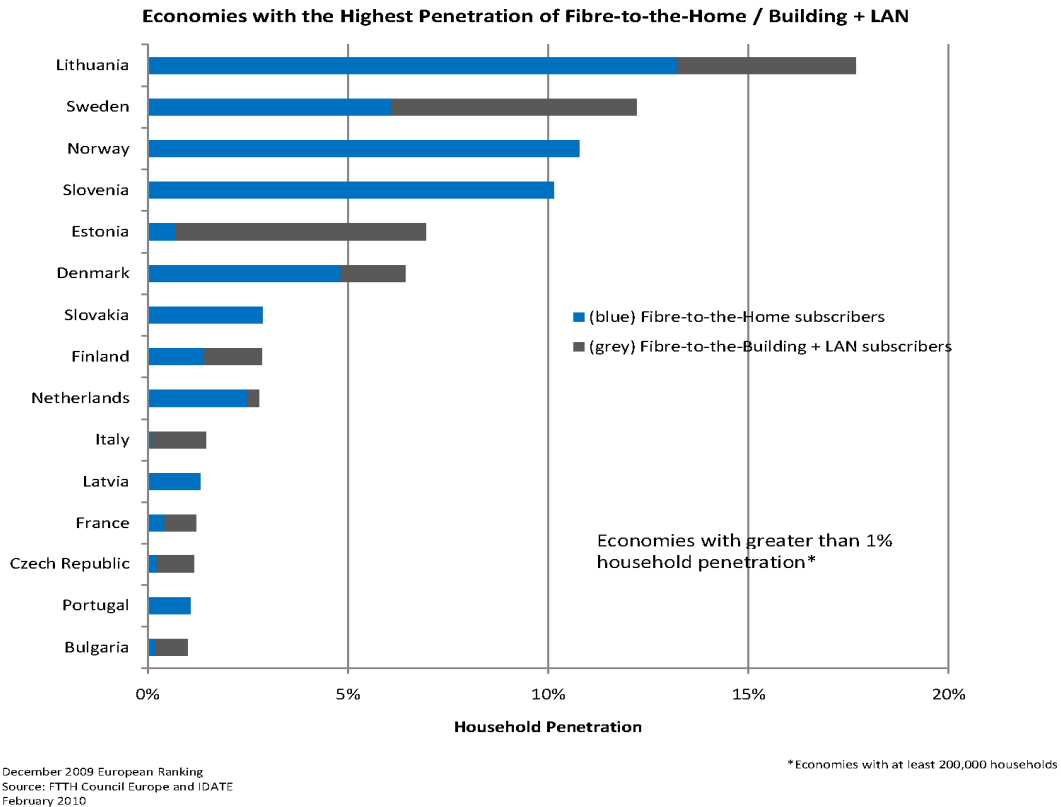
“We are pleased to welcome France amongst the leading FTTH economies”, declares Karel Helsen, President of the FTTH Council Europe. “Although the country’s FTTH penetration rate is only slightly above the required threshold, the entry of such a large country in the Ranking, after Italy in 2006, is significant by European standards, and shows that the adoption of fibre to the home really is accelerating.”

Over the past year, the total number of subscribers in France increased by an amazing 71%, from 180,550 households connected in December 2008 to 308,200 in December 2009. The availability of FTTH also continued to grow from a total of 4.5 million homes passed in December 2008 to 5.7 million in December 2009. Four main operators share the market, lead by Numericable with 220,000 subscribers, followed by Orange, SFR and Free.

And this is only the beginning: with the recent announcement from Incumbent operator Orange that it would invest €2 billion in FTTH between now and 2015, while the French government is planning to invest €2 billion to bring FTTH to less densely populated areas of the country, the race for Fibre to the Home is likely to continue.

The FTTH Council Europe’s unique Ranking is part of its Market Panorama study, commissioned from research firm IDATE, which shows the percentage of homes and businesses that receive broadband communications services over direct fibre-optic connections to their homes or buildings. The European FTTH Ranking is released annually at the FTTH Conference, which is being held this year in Lisbon, Portugal, from 24-25 February.

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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 competitiveness. The FTTH Council Europe consists of more than 130 member companies. www.ftthcouncil.eu

Media Contact:

Nadia Babaali,
 Communications Director
 FTTH Council Europe
 +33 6 20 88 72 38
nadia.babaali@ftthcouncil.eu