

## **Fibre broadband flourishes as Switzerland joins the league of FTTH leaders**

*By the end of 2013, 34 global and 23 European countries had reached the threshold of more than 1% of homes directly connected with fibre. Is YOUR country future-ready?*

FTTH CONFERENCE 2014, STOCKHOLM, 19 February 2014 – Fibre to the home or building (FTTH/B) adoption in Europe is gathering pace, with the total number of subscribers increasing by 29% in 2013 – substantially faster than the year before when growth was around 15% – according to the latest update to the European FTTH market panorama, which was unveiled at the FTTH Conference 2014 at the Stockholmsmässan exhibition centre today.

In total, 13 countries in the EU have experienced growth greater than 30% in FTTH/B subscribers in the past year, including Spain (64%), the Netherlands (43%), France and Portugal (each 41%).

In absolute figures the leading nations in Europe's EU28 are France and Sweden, which exceed 1.2 million FTTH/B subscribers each. Russia remains a heavyweight with nearly 9 million FTTH/B subscribers (of which 1.4 million were added in 2013), while the Ukraine has 1.3 million subscribers, and Turkey has 1.1 million.

Outside Europe, China and Japan are the unmatched world leaders, with 37 million and 24.7 million FTTH/B subscribers, respectively.

These numbers sound impressive, but there is still a long way to go. According to analyst firm Heavy Reading, a country only reaches the "fibre maturity" when 20% of its households are FTTH/B subscribers. So far only nine countries around the world have reached this threshold, and only three of them are European. The United Arab Emirates leads the Global FTTH Ranking<sup>1</sup> with an impressive 85% of homes subscribing to FTTH/B, followed by South Korea, Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore and Taiwan, with subscription rates ranging from 63% to 37%. The first European country, in seventh position in the Global FTTH Ranking, is Lithuania, with 100% coverage and 34% penetration, followed by Sweden (26.5%) and Latvia (23.3%). All other European economies remain below the 20% threshold.

In 2013, the four countries that have benefited from the biggest roll outs are Spain with 2.4 million new homes passed, France with 710,000, Portugal and Sweden with 550,000 each. This shows that even countries deemed "mature", such as Sweden, still have room for growth.

Germany and the UK both have less than 1% penetration, and once again conspicuously failed to qualify for the FTTH Ranking.

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<sup>1</sup> To be included in the FTTH Ranking, a country must have more than 1% of households that subscribe to FTTH/B and more than 200,000 households.

There is one new entrant to the FTTH Ranking: Switzerland, which has 2% household penetration and saw 235% growth in subscribers over the 12 months to December 2013. Out of 73,816 Swiss subscribers, 70% were new subscribers in 2013, which is the highest rate in Europe. Turkey (46%), Spain (39%) and Poland (32%) follow with lower rates but much larger populations.

“We need to do more and I can’t help but feel that some policy makers underestimate the danger of not getting to fibre to the home networks quickly enough,” said Karin Ahl, President of the FTTH Council Europe, in her opening speech at the FTTH Conference. “Within the next 30 years, 70% of the economy is likely to be driven by firms and products we know nothing about today.”

The higher growth rate of subscribers (29%) over that of homes passed (22%) is a good sign for operators, who all need to see a better return on their investment. It is also good news for end users, because a larger subscriber base will encourage more companies to develop services and applications, and help drive down consumer prices.

*Media note: The FTTH Global and European Rankings’ graphs as well as the presentation and video from the FTTH Council Europe press conference at the FTTH Conference 2014 can be downloaded [here](#).*

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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 enhance the quality of life, contribute to a better environment and increase economic competitiveness. The FTTH Council Europe consists of more than 150 member companies.

[www.ftthcouncil.eu](http://www.ftthcouncil.eu)

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