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ERG APPROVES COMMON RULES ON VOIP

Europe's telecommunications regulators at the ERG/IRG Plenary Meeting in Rome on the 6th and 7th of December have approved a number of measures to improve the functioning of telecoms markets. A key outcome of the ERG meeting was the approval of a Common Position for a harmonised application of regulation of Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) services.

Other key points agreed at the meeting were:

- improved mechanisms for exposing the level of compliance of NRAs with ERG common positions;
- a public consultation document on a draft Common Position on symmetric regulation of termination rates amongst fixed network operators and amongst mobile network operators;
- a public consultation on draft best practice guidelines for the regulation of wholesale broadband access markets.

ERG also approved a work programme for 2008 which includes further work on termination rates and consideration of regulatory approaches to sub-national geographic differentiation. The work programme for the coming year will include a check of mobile data roaming charges in Europe.

Roberto Viola, chairman of the European Regulators Group, said, "*Our network of regulators will continue to set the pace in driving more effective regulation in Europe. Our common position on VoIP will help providers roll out their services across Europe more rapidly, whilst ensuring that consumers enjoy consistent levels of protection in terms of access to emergency services.*"

At the IRG Rome Plenary Meeting, which will be the last Plenary Meeting for 2007, it was also decided to establish the Independent Regulators Group (IRG) in the form of a legal entity under Belgian law, as a vehicle to improve the collective resources available to the NRAs.

"Our aim is to build upon the clear success of the ERG in improving competition and the consistency of European telecoms regulation in the last two years, in line with the Commission's Better Regulation agenda", says Roberto Viola, Chair of the ERG. "On institutional issues we shall continue to work closely with the European Commission on improving regulatory practice. We look forward to sharing our ideas with the European Parliament and European Governments over the coming months."

Full details of the ERG documents referred to in this press release can be found on the ERG website http://erg.ec.europa.eu/index_en.htm.

Ends.



Press release ERG IRG

ERG (07) 84

NOTES FOR EDITORS

The European Regulators Group (ERG) was created to act as an advisory group to help the European Commission develop the internal market for electronic communications and services and ensure the consistent application of the regulatory Framework.

The ERG takes into account in its work the objectives given to NRAs in Article 8 of the Framework Directive (2002/21/EC) to promote competition, contribute to the development of the internal market and promote the interests of EU citizens.

The ERG consists of European National Regulatory Authorities (NRAs). Its full members are the twenty-seven EU Member States whilst the four EFTA States (Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein) and three EU Accession/Candidate States (Turkey, Croatia and Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia) participate as observers.

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