



B I P T

BELGIAN INSTITUTE FOR POSTAL SERVICES AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

PRESS RELEASE

A new boost for the electronic communications sector in 2015

Brussels, 16 June 2016 - Today BIPT published the annual statistics relating to the telecoms sector in 2015. The general market context shows that the telecom market grew by 2.4% in 2015: revenue from the television market increased by 4.9%, the mobile market grew by 2.9% and on the fixed market the turnover increase was limited to 1%.

1. Market context: in 2015 the telecom market grew by 2.4%

- After 3 years of decreases in turnover the electronic communications and television services recorded a boost in 2015: +2.4 %, to 8.295 billion euro.
- The positive evolution of revenue was strongest for the television market where revenue had increased by 4.9%. The mobile market grew by 2.9% especially thanks to the higher revenue from retail activities. On the fixed market the increase in turnover was limited to 1%.
- Investments in assets amounting to 19.6% of the annual turnover remain at a high level (1.409 billion euro).
- At the end of 2015, telecom operators employed 18,607 full-time equivalents for providing telecommunications services, i.e. an increase by 360 jobs.

2. Mobile telephony: growth in retail turnover: +90,9 million euro

- After 2 years of loss in volume the mobile network operators are observing an increase in their mobile voice traffic (+ 1%). The number of mobile calling minutes continued to increase in 2015, reaching 16.07 billion minutes. 76.7% of the total calling volume comes from calls to national mobile networks (on net and off net) and 14.9% from traffic to fixed networks. The remaining 8.4% represents the roaming traffic and the international outgoing traffic. Per active SIM card an average of 104 voice minutes is used per month.
- In 2015 24.57 billion SMS messages were sent. The year before 24.97 billion, which means that the use decreased by 1.6%. Per active SIM card an average of 160 SMS messages is still being sent.
- The decrease in turnover that started in 2012 is coming to an end. In 2015 the three mobile network operators and full MVNO Telenet had a joint mobile turnover of 3,645 million euro, an improvement of more than 2.6% compared to 2014. More than half of the turnover is generated from the sale of retail services (54.4%). Next there is the termination of SMS messages with 16.7% followed by the sale of equipment.

3. Mobile broadband: largest annual growth mobile data +85%

- After three years of levelling off, there is growth again for mobile broadband: +16% to 7.45 million active broadband SIM cards compared to +13% in 2014. Per active SIM card an average of 289 MB of data is used per month.

- A shift in the direction of "over the top" voice over IP and message services resulted in an increase in the use of mobile data in 2015. For in 2015 there was an increase by 85% to 44.53 billion megabytes. The annual growth was supported by the "Surf Mobile Campaign" of BIPT and the FPS Economy. In this context 14 telecom operators launched advantageous actions promoting mobile Internet use, at the initiative of the Minister for the Digital Agenda, Alexander De Croo.

4. Fixed telephony: the use of fixed telephony is on the decline

- In line with the developments of the past few years the number of accesses to the fixed telephony network is slightly diminishing by 1%. The growth on the residential market (+1.6%) is countered by the decrease on the business market (-6.2%).
- Despite the curbing effect of the bundles, the use of the fixed line for voice telephony continues to dwindle strongly due to the competition from mobile and OTT services. The 9.2% decrease in the fixed voice traffic is stronger than in 2014 (-7.4%) and in 2013 (-7%).

5. Fixed broadband: Belgium at the top for +30 Mbps, spectacular growth above 100 Mbps

- The number of fixed broadband lines continues to increase in 2015 (to 4.1 billion lines) but the growth rate is lower than in 2014: 2.7% versus 4.8% in 2014. Out of the 4.121 million fixed broadband lines 80% delivers a speed of 30 Mbps or more by the end of 2015. That is 5.2 percentage points more than in 2014 but the annual growth is slightly decreasing (10% compared to 18% in 2014). Within the EU-28 Belgium stays in the lead: the fixed broadband share in Belgium is 2.6 times as big as the EU average (30% in June 2015).
- Connections between 30 and 100 Mbps still form the largest group (50.6% of the total number of lines) but as of 2015 a decrease can be observed for the first time in favour of the even faster connections above 100 Mbps, the share of which increases spectacularly from 14% to 29%.

6. Bundles and TV: advance of bundles including mobile, TV revenue +4.4%

- The number of stand-alone services is decreasing: television comes from bundles in 70% of the cases while for fixed telephony 79% of all connections are part of a multiplay package. For fixed broadband this percentage is increasing to 83%. The most popular bundle remains a combination of fixed broadband, fixed telephony and TV (45% of the total number of bundles) despite the onset of the bundles combining fixed and mobile services (from 32 to 36% of the total number of bundles).
- In 2015 the Belgian television market increased by 1.6% or 72,493 connections. Digital TV grew by 4.8% to 3.9 million connections, enough to compensate a 15% decrease of the number of analogue TV connections. The digital TV penetration consequently increases from 80 to 84%. Added up the total number of TV connections increases by 1.6 percentage points to 4,474,959.
- In 2015 the Belgian TV market generated 1,097 million euro in retail revenue from TV subscriptions (or an increase of TV revenue by 4.4%), especially thanks to extra revenue from watching on demand and premium packages.

For more information (for journalists), please contact:

Dirk Appelmans
Spokesman
Tel.: 02 226 87 67

More info: www.bipt.be

BIPT - Ellipse Building - Building C - Koning Albert II-laan 35 - B-1030 Brussel