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ETNO welcomes European Council conclusions on the single market for telecoms

Brussels - ETNO members, who represent the main investors in today's and tomorrow's high-speed networks, welcome the conclusions of the European Council, which echo the industry call for a single market for telecoms. A broad reform is needed in order to boost the sector's competitiveness and unlock its potential to drive growth and jobs in Europe.

ETNO members are confident that the European Commission will work at delivering a sound project on the creation of an investment and innovation friendly single European Telecoms Market, following the indications given by the European Council and the intentions already expressed by the Commission itself, and with the participation of all stakeholders.

"One of the main reasons behind the sector's current revenue decline is the fragmentation of the European market hampering the development by operators of new innovative services throughout the EU. Changes in the market structure are necessary. ETNO therefore welcomes the reference made by the European Council conclusions on the intention of the European Commission to identify remaining obstacles and concrete measures to allow the European operators to build the single market for electronic communications", says Luigi Gambardella, ETNO Executive Board Chair.

In order to overcome the current crisis and regain competitiveness on the global stage, Europe should consider its telecommunications sector as a key asset, and a well-functioning European single market for electronic communications as a driving force. The unification of the market would not only benefit a sector which employs 1.2 million people, but would also positively impact on the economy as a whole. It would also be in the interest of consumers and lead to positive spillover effects for other European businesses.

The recent announcement by the Commission to reform regulation to allow operators to design new business models and stimulate investments in new networks, is an encouraging signal. Indeed, an important reform will be necessary to increase the competitiveness of Europe's telecoms sector, allowing it to compete on the global stage.

"In line with Vice-President Kroes's announcement on a new broadband regulatory approach, ETNO now calls upon the Commission for a bold reform of the policy framework for the sector. It

should involve further deregulation to reflect changing market realities and improve incentives for investment, while at the same time allowing for more consolidation to achieve the necessary scale for a sustainable and competitive EU industry”, added Gambardella.

Given the strategic importance of the telecoms sector, it is important that the right measures are in place so that industry may deploy its benefits to the European economy and society as a whole. This issue must now be put on top of the EU political agenda.

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ETNO's 37 member companies and 12 observers from Europe and beyond represent a significant part of total ICT activity in Europe. They account for an aggregate annual turnover of more than €600 billion and employ over 1.6 million people. ETNO companies are the main drivers of broadband and are committed to its continual growth in Europe.

