Issues for Discussion

• What is the Code?
• How does the Code specifically provide for end-users with disabilities?
• What new benefits do all consumers get from the Code?
• Questions & Answers
What is the EECC?

- The EECC is the *European Electronic Communications Code*
- Update the regulatory framework for communications throughout the Union – making it fit for the digital age
- Repeals and replaces four existing Directives; the Access Directive, the Authorisation Directive, the Framework Directive and the Universal Services Directive
- Updates the rules arounds:
  - spectrum allocation
  - access to infrastructure
  - universal service obligations
  - rights for end-users of electronic communications services
Specific Reference to End-Users with Disabilities

The aim of the EECC (per, Article 1):

— Ensure the provision throughout the Union of good quality, affordable, publically available services through effective competition and choice, to deal with circumstances in which the needs of end-users, including those with disabilities in order to access the services on an equal basis with others, are not satisfactorily met by the market and to law down the necessary end-user rights.

One of the four objectives of the EECC (per, Article 3)

— Promote the interests of the citizen of the Union, by … enabling maximum benefits in terms of choice, price and quality on the basis of effective competition… by ensuring a high and common level of protection for end-users through the necessary sector-specific rules and by addressing the needs, such as affordable prices, of specific social groups, in particular end-users with disabilities, the elderly and end-users with special social needs, and choice and equivalent access for end-users with disabilities.
 Requirement to Consult

Article 24:

- Competent authorities **required** to take account of the views of stakeholders, particularly those with disabilities on issues related to all end-users and consumer rights, **including equivalent access and choice for end-users with disabilities**.

- A consultation mechanism to get the views of consumers on their decisions must be established by the competent authorities.

- This consultation mechanism **must be accessible for end-users with disabilities**.
Universal Service Obligations

- Universal Service Obligations – Requires Member States to ensure the provision of service to end-users who are unable to access them.
- Impediment to access can be:
  - **Geographical** (no commercial deployment by operators in that area)
  - **Financial** (services are unaffordable for end-users of low income or with special social needs)
  - **Lack of provision by industry** (for end-users with disabilities)
Article 85 (4) requires Member States to ensure, in light of national conditions, that support is provided, as appropriate, to consumers with disabilities, and that other specific measures are taken, where appropriate, with a view to ensuring that related terminal equipment, and specific equipment and specific services that enhance equivalent access, including where necessary total conversion services and relay services, are available and affordable.

- Requirement to ensure that the terminal equipment is available and affordable
- ComReg has previously been involved with ensuring that undertakings provide specific services to end-users with disabilities
- Aim to build on this going forward
Equivalent Access for End-Users’ with Disabilities

**Article 111** requires Member States to ensure that the competent authorities specify requirements to be met by providers of publically available ECS to ensure that end-users with disabilities:

(a) Have access to ECS, including the related contractual information provided pursuant to Article 102, equivalent to that enjoyed by the majority of end-users; and

(b) benefit from the choice of undertakings and services available to the majority of end-users.

- Measures to ensure equivalence in access and choice for disabled end users ComReg 14/52 D04/14
- Text Relay Service ComReg 15/143 D09/15
- Accessibility Statement ComReg 15/98 D06/15
- By requiring operators to provide access to the specified products/services (e.g., text relay) that are compatible with equipment available on the market;
- Promoting awareness of related terminal equipment through links to GARI (Global Accessibility Reporting Initiative) website: [https://www.gari.info/](https://www.gari.info/)
New Consumer Rights and their relevance for End-Users with Disabilities

Article 102 *Information Requirements for Contracts*

- Before a consumer is bound by a contract detailed information of their services need to be provided to end-users
- Should be accessible for end-users with disabilities
- Contract summary template – 1 page but can be extended to make it accessible for end-users with disabilities

Article 103 *Transparency, Comparison of Offers and Publication of Information*

- Requirement to publish information on services online – must be accessible for end-users with disabilities
Continued …

Article 104 *Quality of service related to internet access services and publically available ICS*

- CA’s can require operators to publish QoS information
- Can include information on the measures taken to ensure equivalent access for end-users with disabilities

Article 106 *Provider Switching and Number Portability*

- New obligation on providers to have a compensation scheme for Delays, Abuses to Porting / Switching / Missed Installation appointments
- Details of the scheme must be published in an accessible format
New Consumer Rights (General)

Shopping Around
- Contract Summary Templates (Article 102)
- Potential Quality of Service Publication Requirements (Article 104)
- Price Comparison Website (Article 103)

During Contract
- Consumption Limit Alert (Article 102)

End of Contract
- Best Tariff Advice and Information on How to End Contract (Article 105)
- Compensation for Delays, Abuses to Porting / Switching / Missed Installation (Article 106)
- Refund of remaining pre-pay credit on leaving provider (Article 106)
Q&A
Thank You!

Follow on questions?

tprd@decc.gov.ie

Public consultation launching shortly!

See Gov.ie for details