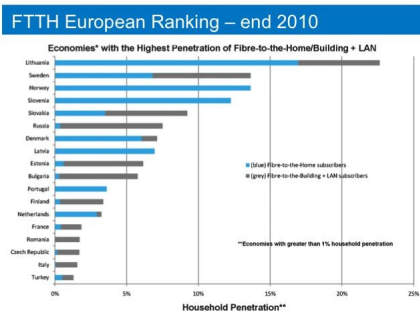




Once again the FTTH Council's fibre-fest, this year in Milan, demonstrates the growing gulf between the UK and our continental neighbours.

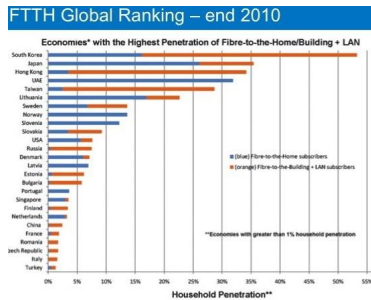
The crush of 3,000 delegates, the crowded pressroom, the extraordinarily busy exhibition areas all underscore the bandwidth intensity of the event. The annual league table of European countries achieving at least 1% coverage of FTTH now includes Turkey but the real clues to the pervasive confidence of FTTH advocates are found in the detail of the conference agenda.



To the casual observer the show might all be about cables, connectors and clever kit. But here on day 1, upfront in the agenda, 'The role of Access in sustainable growth' and 'FTTH The service Enabler'. Here are the exploiters of all this new-found bandwidth – the cloud collaborators (led here by Microsoft), the entertainers (Sky) and those driven to innovate.

By the time we get to hear Neelie Kroes in the closing plenary tomorrow there'll be no doubt in any delegate's mind that the political quest for growth, for economic recovery and societal development, maps directly onto the plans for FTTH utility investments.

The news was not, of course, entirely positive. From a global perspective Europe is in the slow lane. Even counting Russia (where FTTH connectivity is likely to overtake the USA at some point in the next 6 months), Europe as a whole, with a mere 40% FTTH growth last year, is very much trailing behind the massive acceleration in Asia.



But if Europe as a whole is in the slow lane then, alas, the UK is at best crawling along the hard shoulder.

The FTTH Council's analysis includes only those countries that have at least 1% of their households enjoying superfit fibre connectivity - so the UK doesn't yet appear in the league tables.

Looking ahead, the UK picture remains gloomy.

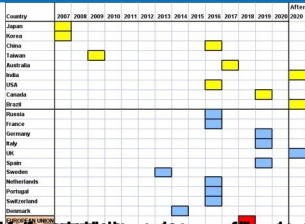
By 2015 the analysts report that the UK will still only be serving 10% of households with direct fully fibred connections – a long way short of the European leadership our government would aspire to.

By the analysts' calculations it will be some time beyond 2020 that the UK meets 'fibre maturity' (20% of households subscribing to FTTH) in company with India and Brazil.

# On-line from Milan

Written by David Brunnen  
Wednesday, 09 February 2011 13:57

## Europe in Context: the Race to Fibre Maturity



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