

Telecommunications in the EU

Around 80 mobile subscriptions per 100 inhabitants in the EU25 in 2003

Slight decrease in the number of main telephone lines since 2001

Mobile telephony has experienced enormous growth since 1995. During the period 1995-2003, the number of mobile telephone subscriptions¹ has grown 42% each year on average at **EU25** level. In 2003, there were over 364 million subscriptions in the **EU25** compared to only 22 million in 1995, meaning there were on average 80 subscriptions to mobile phones per 100 inhabitants in the **EU25** in 2003 compared to only 5 in 1995.

Due to competition from mobile telephone networks and broadband, the number of main telephone lines² in the **EU25**, which increased from 197 million in 1995 to 230 million in 2001, has slightly decreased since then, registering 229 million in 2003.

This information comes from a report³ released today by **Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European Communities**. This publication also provides information on the Internet access of households, the broadband penetration rate and some other features of the telecommunications sector.

Highest number of mobile phone subscriptions per inhabitant in Luxembourg, Sweden and Italy

Luxembourg (120 per 100 inhabitants), **Sweden** (98), **Italy** (96) and the **Czech Republic** (95) recorded the highest numbers of mobile phone subscriptions per 100 inhabitants in 2003. It should be noted that subscriptions include active pre-paid cards and that one person may have more than one subscription. Therefore, the number of subscriptions can be higher than the population. The lowest numbers of mobile phone subscriptions per 100 inhabitants were recorded in **Poland** (46), **Latvia** (52) and **Lithuania** (62).

The number of mobile subscriptions rose by 8.6% in the **EU25** in 2003 compared to 2002. All Member States registered increases, ranging from around 5% in **Malta, Finland, Austria** and **Italy** to more than 30% in **Latvia, Cyprus** and **Lithuania**. The growth can be expected to slow down in those Member States having the highest subscription density.

Large differences in the density of main telephone lines among the Member States

In 2003, the average density of the main telephone network in the **EU25** was 50 lines per 100 inhabitants. However, large differences can be observed between the Member States. The density varied from 24 lines per 100 inhabitants in **Lithuania** and **Slovakia** and 28 in **Latvia** to 67 lines per 100 inhabitants in **Denmark**, 66 in **Germany** and 62 in **Cyprus** and the **Netherlands**.

On average in the **EU25**, the number of lines slightly decreased, by 0.3% in 2003 compared to 2002. The largest falls were observed in **Lithuania** (-11.0%), **Slovakia** (-7.7%) and **Latvia** (-6.8%).

Mobile phone subscriptions and main telephone lines

	Mobile phone subscriptions per 100 inhabitants		Mobile phone subscriptions: % change	Main telephone lines per 100 inhabitants		Main telephone lines: % change
	1995	2003	2003/2002	1995	2003	2003/2002
EU25	4.9	79.9	8.6	44.2	50.3	-0.3
Belgium	2.3	84.1	7.1	45.7	49.0	-0.9
Czech Republic	0.4	95.2	12.8	23.2	35.5	-1.3
Denmark	15.8	88.6	6.5	61.4	67.1	-2.4
Germany	4.6	78.5	9.6	51.5	65.8	1.1
Estonia	2.1	77.4	19.0	28.4	34.2	-2.7
Greece	2.6	84.9*	17.0**	48.7	47.2	-3.9
Spain	2.4	89.6	11.0	38.4	42.7	0.7
France	2.3	69.9	8.0	56.1	56.9	-0.6
Ireland	4.4	85.8	13.3	36.4	49.3	-1.0
Italy	6.9	96.4	5.5	43.4	45.9	-2.0
Cyprus	6.9	77.2	32.0	53.8	62.4	4.5
Latvia	0.6	52.3	33.0	28.9	28.0	-6.8
Lithuania	0.4	62.2	31.9	25.8	23.9	-11.0
Luxembourg	6.6	120.2	14.0	57.7	54.7	-1.0
Hungary	2.6	78.3	15.4	20.9	35.6	-1.6
Malta	2.9	73.0	4.7	46.2	53.4	1.2
Netherlands	3.5	77.2	24.3	52.7	61.8	0.0
Austria	4.8	87.9	5.3	47.8	39.2	-0.9
Poland	0.2	45.5	25.2	14.8	32.2	3.6
Portugal	3.4	89.9	9.7	35.8	40.3	-3.7
Slovenia	1.4	94.4	22.4	30.9	40.8	2.9
Slovakia	0.2	68.4	25.8	21.0	24.1	-7.7
Finland	20.4	91.2	5.1	55.1	49.3	-5.8
Sweden	23.0	98.4	10.7	68.2	60.9	-2.2
United Kingdom	9.8	84.4*	11.1**	50.3	52.0*	-2.3**

*2002

**2002/2001

1. **Mobile telephone subscriptions** refer to subscriptions to an automatic public mobile telephone service.
2. A **main telephone line** is a telephone line connecting the subscriber's terminal to the Public Switched Telephone Network. ISDN (Integrated Services Digital Network) lines are counted as main telephone lines.
3. Eurostat, *Statistics in Focus*, Theme 4, *Industry, trade and services*, 8/2005, 'Telecommunications in Europe'.

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