

## Middle East goes for FTTH

*FTTH Council Europe conducts first ever meeting of its 'Middle East Group' in Bahrain*

The FTTH Council Europe has founded a Middle East Group. This initiative represents the next step in a process of extending the highly successful market development activities of the FTTH Council Europe into the Middle East region. The Group is a working party of new Gulf-based and European Council members and will communicate the economic and social benefits of major FTTH deployments to the region. The FTTH Council Europe Middle East Group will have its first official meeting today in Manama, in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

“There is an enormous opportunity for FTTH to grow throughout the Middle East,” said Faris Awartani, Chair of the FTTH Council Europe Middle East Group. “We expect the Middle East Region to become one of the fastest growing telecommunication markets in the next years. Therefore the Middle East Group has been created to collaborate on ways to encourage investment and communicate the advantages of FTTH.”

According to figures from the latest FTTH Council Europe ‘Market Panorama’ (conducted in association with IDATE), the Middle East market has significant growth potential. As at the end of 2008, the entire Middle East region had 7,500 FTTH/B<sup>1</sup> subscribers and a total of 62,000 FTTH/B homes passed. The total population for the region is estimated to be almost 200 million (Source:OECD).

“We have been tracking the FTTH market in the Middle East for some time, and have set up this working group in response to the demands of several new Middle Eastern members,” commented Joeri Van Bogaert, President of the FTTH Council Europe. “The tremendous interest in this first session has vindicated that decision, and we are already planning a second, larger event to take place later on this year.”

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<sup>1</sup> FTTH: Fiber-to-the-Home; FTTB: Fiber-to-the-Building

**About the Fibre to the Home (FTTH) Council Europe**

The FTTH Council Europe [www.ftthcouncil.eu](http://www.ftthcouncil.eu) is a market development organisation with a mission to accelerate the availability of fibre based, broadband access networks to consumers and businesses.

The Council promotes this technology because it will deliver a flow of new services that make a decisive difference in the lives of consumers and companies and create value for the wider society.

Its members include leading telecommunications companies and many world leaders in the telecommunications industry.

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