

As at the end of December 2009, subscriptions to all forms of communication technology increased when compared to the corresponding period in 2008.

Post and Telecommunications: Q4/2009

Cut-off date:
26 February 2010

Telecommunications

In the fourth quarter of 2009, the absolute number of mobile telephone subscriptions totalled 422,083. Subscriptions to post-paid schemes were recorded at 78,389, while pre-paid scheme subscriptions stood at 343,694, which has put the mobile penetration rate at 101.3 subscriptions per 100 persons. This indicates that a person may have more than one mobile subscription, a phenomenon which is also registered in most EU countries. Both local originating mobile traffic and outbound roaming experienced an increase when compared to the corresponding period in 2008. On the other hand, a decrease was registered in inbound incoming visitors' minutes (see Table 4).

The fixed-telephone subscription index increased by 2.7 per cent to 118.2 in the comparable quarter in 2009 (Table 1). Total fixed originating minutes to national network amounted to around 171 million minutes, an increase of 7.1 per cent over the comparative quarter in 2008. Around 14.5 million minutes were consumed towards an international network.

Internet, Analogue and Digital Subscriptions

The internet subscription index rose by 8.1 per cent from 140.5 in Quarter 4 of 2008 to 151.9 as at the end of the equivalent quarter in 2009. Out of every 100 households in the population, 78.2 had an internet subscription.

Table 6 shows a shift in the internet subscriptions. While the number of active narrowband (dial-up) subscriptions continued to decline by 68.3 per cent over the previous year, the number of broadband users increased by 9.7 per cent. As at the end of 2009, 88.4 per cent of broadband subscribers had a connection speed varying between 2Mbps and 10Mbps.

Pay TV subscription index increased by 5.0 per cent when compared to 2008. Analogue and digital television subscriptions were recorded at 97.9 per cent of households (Table 3). Digital subscriptions amounted to 79.4 per cent of the overall subscriptions, an increase of 31.4 per cent with respect to 2008 (Table 7). This increase was accompanied by another significant drop of 40.8 per cent in analogue TV subscriptions.

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Post and Couriers

Table 8 focuses on different types of national postal traffic. Total postal traffic for the fourth quarter of 2009 amounted to around 12.8 million items, almost at par with 2008. Total parcels and other items were recorded at 25,683, an increase of 33.1 per cent when compared to Quarter 4 of 2008.

Items received and dispatched by couriers amounted to 108,468 - an increase of 65.1 per cent when compared to the same quarter in 2008 ■

Table 1. Information society subscriptions indices

Subscriptions Indices	Q4							% change 2009/2008
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	
Internet subscriptions	106.8	118.4	121.2	130.0	136.6	140.5	151.9	8.1
Fixed telephony subscriptions	100.2	99.9	100.7	100.8	109.1	115.1	118.2	2.7
Mobile telephony subscriptions	103.5	110.1	115.9	123.7	132.5	137.7	150.7	9.4
Analogue and Digital television subscriptions	101.4	103.0	104.6	114.9	121.9	135.2	142.0	5.0

Table 2. Information society indicators per 100 population

Subscriptions indicators per 100 population	Q4							% change 2009/2008
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	
Internet subscriptions	18.0	20.1	22.1	22.4	24.5	24.9	26.7	7.2
Mobile telephony subscriptions	69.1	74.0	80.1	81.8	91.0	93.2	101.3	8.7

Table 3. Information society indicators per 100 households

Subscriptions indicators per 100 households	Q4							% change 2009/2008
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	
Internet subscriptions	56.9	62.6	63.6	67.7	70.7	72.3	78.2	8.2
Analogue and Digital television subscriptions	72.3	72.9	73.5	80.2	84.6	93.2	97.9	5.0

Table 4. Mobile telephony

Mobile and Pager Subscriptions	as at end of September	as at end of December		Absolute change 2009/2008	% change 2009/2008
	2009	2008	2009		
Number of mobile subscriptions (total)	418,341	385,636	422,083	36,447	9.5
Post-Paid schemes	74,498	52,569	78,389	25,820	49.1
Pre-Paid schemes	343,843	333,067	343,694	10,627	3.2
Number of pager subscriptions (total)	4,000	4,129	3,713	-416	-10.1
Local Originating Mobile Traffic*	Q3	Q4		Absolute change 2009/2008	% change 2009/2008
	2009	2008	2009		
Local outgoing minutes to fixed traffic	6,711,475	5,811,156	6,687,138	875,982	15.1
Local outgoing minutes to mobile traffic	70,277,667	57,206,385	74,305,474	17,099,089	29.9
Mobile originating minutes to international networks	1,912,216	1,517,266	1,824,548	307,282	20.3
Outgoing SMS traffic	131,880,605	117,591,996	125,450,778	7,858,782	6.7
Outgoing MMS traffic	70,940	86,127	59,047	-27,080	-31.4
Roaming	Q3	Q4		Absolute change 2009/2008	% change 2009/2008
	2009	2008	2009		
Outbound (Maltese subscriptions abroad)					
Total minutes originated while roaming	1,385,911	1,099,588	1,287,492	187,904	17.1
Total minutes received while roaming	909,031	684,720	831,849	147,129	21.5
SMS sent while roaming	2,679,312	1,681,691	1,928,021	246,330	14.6
Inbound roaming (visitors in Malta)					
Total outgoing visitors minutes	6,712,589	3,734,389	3,937,439	203,050	5.4
Total incoming visitors minutes	4,528,229	2,968,534	2,327,763	-640,771	-21.6

* Excluding roaming

Table 5. Fixed telephony

Fixed Telephony Subscription	as at end of September	as at end of December		Absolute change 2009/2008	% change 2009/2008
	2009	2008	2009		
Number of subscriptions	246,592	239,252	245,852	6,600	2.8
Fixed Telephony	Q3	Q4		Absolute change 2009/2008	% change 2009/2008
	2009	2008	2009		
Total fixed originating minutes to national networks	163,897,263	159,655,254	171,055,695	11,400,441	7.1
Fixed to fixed	148,202,498	144,815,307	156,167,548	11,352,241	7.8
Fixed to mobile	15,694,765	14,839,947	14,888,147	48,200	0.3
Total fixed originating minutes to international networks	14,617,369	12,448,094	14,499,989	2,051,895	16.5
Traditional fixed minutes	13,701,744	11,594,789	13,602,302	2,007,513	17.3
Calling Cards	915,625	853,305	897,687	44,382	5.2

Table 6. Internet

Internet Subscriptions	as at end of September	as at end of December		Absolute change 2009/2008	% change 2009/2008
	2009	2008	2009		
Internet Subscriptions	109,905	102,908	111,290	8,382	8.1
Active Narrowband (dial-up)	897	1,993	631	-1,362	-68.3
Broadband	109,008	100,915	110,659	9,744	9.7
Less than 144 kbps	1,739	2,706	1,230	-1,476	-54.5
Between 144 kbps and less than 2 Mbps	1,779	2,649	1,438	-1,211	-45.7
Between 2 Mbps and less than 10 Mbps	95,145	85,924	97,861	11,937	13.9
Greater than 10 Mbps	10,345	9,636	10,130	494	5.1

Table 7. Analogue and digital TV

Pay TV Broadcasting	as at end of September	as at end of December		Absolute change 2009/2008	% change 2009/2008
	2009	2008	2009		
Analogue and Digital subscriptions	138,700	132,632	139,336	6,704	5.1
Analogue subscriptions	34,647	48,448	28,677	-19,771	-40.8
Digital (cable and terrestrial) subscriptions	104,053	84,184	110,659	26,475	31.4

Table 8. National post: items received and dispatched

National Post	Q3	Q4		Absolute change 2009/2008	% change 2009/2008
	2009	2008	2009		
Total Traffic	10,403,303	12,811,865	12,828,530	16,665	0.1
Domestic Service	8,389,645	10,280,130	10,108,709	-171,421	-1.7
Outbound Service	895,816	1,181,257	1,064,963	-116,294	-9.8
Inbound Service	1,117,842	1,350,478	1,654,858	304,380	22.5
Parcels and other Items	18,269	19,301	25,683	6,382	33.1
Domestic Service	46	135	148	13	9.6
Outbound Service	5,282	7,183	7,484	301	4.2
Inbound Service	12,941	11,983	18,051	6,068	50.6

Table 9. Courier Service: items received and dispatched

Courier Service	Q3	Q4		Absolute change 2009/2008	% change 2009/2008
	2009	2008	2009		
Total Traffic	101,593	65,692	108,468	42,776	65.1
Letters/documents	58,062	33,289	59,771	26,482	79.6
Parcels	43,531	32,403	48,696	16,293	50.3

Methodological Notes

1. The data in this release are based on a quarterly census among fixed and mobile telephone, cable television and internet , Voice Over Internet Protocol, postal and courier service providers. The data is collected by MCA (Malta Communications Authority).
2. These statistics are as at the end of each quarter.
3. The statistics in this release should be considered as provisional and are therefore subject to revision. Each release may include revisions of past quarterly data. Revisions may be carried out in respect of a rolling two-year period.
4. On the basis of the information provided indices have been calculated for major groups showing the level of specified variable (for example internet subscriptions), relative to the average level throughout the base year 2003.
5. The mode of data collection related to Couriers has been changed as from January 2009, and as a result information for previous years cannot be compared on a like with like basis.
6. **Active mobile** subscribers having made at least one call, SMS, MMS or data activity both 2G and 3G during the period under review.
7. **Active internet** subscribers are defined as those connections having recorded a transaction within 90 days of the period stipulated. Past data has been revised.
8. **Broadband** is defined as a connection to the internet which is 'always on' and has a speed of more than 128 kbps.
9. **Active fixed telephony** subscribers are defined as those connections which made and received any calls within 90 days of the period stipulated.
10. **Fixed line telephony** comprises calls originating from publicly available telephone services provided at a fixed location.
11. International minutes consumed from a fixed line are inclusive of both services provided by ISP and fixed telephony providers from Quarter 3 2005. Traffic originating from all operators offering fixed traffic telephony including analogue telephony, and digital communications (including wireless telephony).
12. From 2005, cable subscription indices are inclusive of digital television.
13. **National Post and Courier Service**
 - Domestic Area:** Volume of domestically destined postal items falling within the reserved area.
 - Outbound:** Volume of domestically originating letters in the reserved area forwarded to foreign destinations.
 - Inbound:** Volume of foreign originating letters in the reserved area forwarded to Malta