A Perspective on the 2019 FTTH/B Panorama Europe Report

By Mike Knott

In the current crisis, things seem to be changing in an instant — and never before have the eyes of the world been so focused on graphs and data. As lockdown-release activities are tested, experts and statisticians around the world are working on models and spreadsheets, which will literally control our lives over the coming months and years.
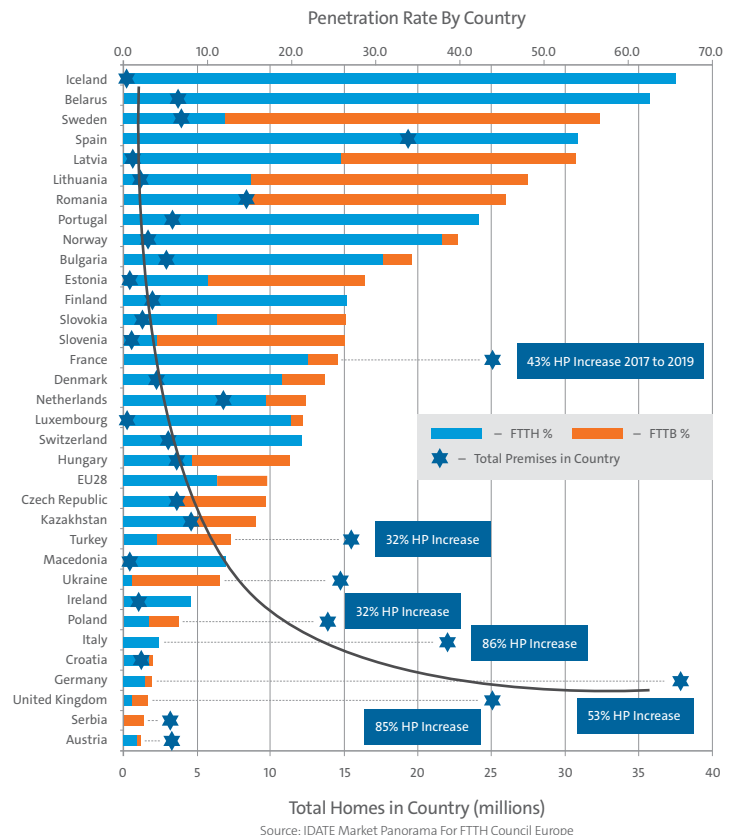
What's the Key Trend in The Data?

Taking a lead from the current focus on data analysis, I have taken some time to dig into the figures — but I extended the timeframe back to a couple of years ago. The FTTH European Conference in Valencia (2018) seems like a world away now. Shortly after that conference, I posted an article giving a perspective on the Market Panorama presented in 2018.

In that article, I postulated that the league table of FTTH penetration rates by country has an inverse relationship with the size of the country. So, smaller countries are generally higher up the league table. That inference still offers a large opportunity for industry players when larger countries begin to deploy.

Using the latest IDATE league table, I did the same analysis simply overlaying the number of households in a given country onto the penetration graph (Russia not included, due to the dominance of FTTB).

It's clear that this trend is still strong — larger countries are lower in the league table. Where there is a big gap between the bars and the stars, that's where there is opportunity for new FTTH build. The dotted lines indicate where to focus. It's easy to plot a neat line through the stars, which shows a good correlation with the data.

Penetration Rate By Country

- FTTH %
- FTTB %
- Total Premises in Country

43% HP Increase 2017 to 2019
32% HP Increase
32% HP Increase
86% HP Increase
85% HP Increase
53% HP Increase

Total Homes in Country (millions)

Source: IDATE Market Panorama For FTTH Council Europe

What's the Key Trend in The Data? (cont.)

But there's good news buried in the data, which I think is important to highlight. I focused on what I would term "countries of opportunity" to investigate what has changed since the 2017 report. For these countries, I just indicated the percent change in homes passed over the two years after IDATE.

> I think the numbers tell a very positive story for the industry. There has been a significant increase in homes passed since 2017 for every large country sitting in the lower regions of the table.

The Fight Is On

In the heavyweight category, Spain has been the leader and now France is showing the way by powering up the league table. The previously sleeping giants in Germany, Italy, and the U.K. are really starting to move. All over Europe, competitive operators are taking advantage of favourable regulatory intervention and positive investor sentiment — the incumbents are reacting to the threat.

I mentioned in the previous article that the copper foundations that many countries' networks are built on was starting to become tarnished. Now we see that copper is positively crumbling away and being replaced by fibre — those amazing filaments of pure glass that today's world is so dependent upon.

Staying Connected Through the FTTH Council

The Fibre-to-the-Home (FTTH) Council Europe reacted quickly to the pandemic. After postponing the FTTH conference planned for April 2020, the council was able to secure a slot at the originally planned Berlin Messe venue for December of this year. As a board member for the council, I took part in that decision. However, the council was conscious that within the industry there is an appetite for the influential FTTH/B Market Panorama, which is usually a highlight of the event. With that in mind, the council ran a **webinar** on the originally planned date of 23rd April, where the Panorama was presented by the familiar voice of Roland Motagne of IDATE.

Author: Mike Knott
Corning Optical Communications
Market Development Manager
FTTH Council Europe Board Member

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