

Russia predicts further telecom growth

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Russia's telecom sector is expected to continue its steady growth relative to the country's GDP, Telecommunications Minister Leonid Reiman said Friday.

Speaking at a news conference in Moscow, Reiman said telecoms would account for a bit over 5 percent of Russia's GDP this year compared to 4.8 percent in 2004.

Reiman based the bullish predictions on anticipated further development of third-generation mobile services in 2006 along with the pending privatization of telecom giant Svyazinvest.

Svyazinvest, which includes national long-distance carrier Rostelecom, could be privatized before Moscow adopts regulations protecting certain special communications customers, the minister said.

In addition, Reiman said licenses for 3G mobile would be issued sometime during the coming year with the goal of seeing free incoming calls nationwide and service coverage of 100 percent of the sprawling Motherland.

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