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New directive allows for freedom of choice of router

## Dutch consumers no longer obligated to choose modems offered by their provider

Amsterdam, July 28th, 2021 - The word is out: The Dutch Consumer & Market Authority (ACM) has issued [a new policy measure](#) that specifies that consumers and companies in the Netherlands can now choose their own modem. The policy measure was published on July 27 2021 and will come into effect six months after its publication. This means that starting from early 2022, consumers will no longer be obligated to accept the modem offered by their Internet service provider, but will be able to choose the modem that best suits their needs. The VTKE - an alliance of European telecom equipment manufacturers - has been campaigning for years for free choice of modem and therefore welcomes this new directive.

The European Union has been in favour of free choice of modem since 2015 with Regulation 2015/2120. In 2014, Finland was the first European country to allow consumers to choose their own modem. Germany followed in 2016, and Italy in 2018. In the Netherlands, only a few network operators currently allow customers to choose which terminal device they want to use for their internet connection. This choice can still be one of the network operator's own devices, but not necessarily. These network operators enable their customers to choose their own modem, which is very unusual in the Netherlands.

Rudi Stahl, Senior Business Development Manager at Gigaset, manufacturer of telephones and smart home products, among other things: "Providers in the Netherlands used to be able to decide which modem you as a customer got along with your subscription. And that's rather strange, seeing as when you take out a telecom subscription, for example, you can decide for yourself which smartphone you want to use. So, why not have it be the same with modems? Providers pointed to supposed technical and security issues for not allowing free choice of modem, although these had already been extensively discussed and disproven on the basis of [a study](#) set up precisely for this purpose. Not surprisingly, the analysis of the proposed regulation come to the conclusion that: 'On the whole, it can be stated that free choice regarding terminal devices has little effect on the functioning and security of the network.'" After the publication of this research report, things remained quiet. That was, until February 13 2019, when the State Secretary of Economic Affairs and Climate Change sent [a letter](#) to the Dutch House of Representatives about the sale of separate modems and security updates. In it, she wrote that she would leave the decision on the position of the network connection point to the ACM.

The ACM has now therefore drawn up a new policy measure, making it possible for consumers to choose their own modem. This will be received as good news by many Dutch people. A VTKE survey in March 2021 showed that almost half of the Dutch population (49 percent) considers freedom of choice of modem important. Moreover, an internet modem that provides an excellent internet



connection has become essential in every household – this is particularly important now that we are working from home more than ever, which puts more pressure on our home network.

For years, the VTKE has been committed to making freedom of choice of modem a possibility, and is very pleased with this ruling. A VTKE spokesperson said: "Consumers themselves know exactly what they want when it comes to their home network, and they should always have the freedom to choose the modem that meets their needs. We are proud to see that all combined efforts have led to this result and we hope that this decision will also encourage other countries to start adapting their guidelines."

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#### ***About the VTKE***

*The Verband der Telekommunikations-Endgerätehersteller/Alliance of Telecommunications Terminal Equipment Manufacturers (VTKE) is made up of primarily medium-sized companies operating in Europe. Together, they are committed to securing the long-term success of a liberalized telecommunications market. In addition, these companies want to increase awareness of the importance of telecommunications terminal equipment in politics and society. Furthermore, they are working together to create a stable, future-oriented regulatory and economic framework, as this is the basis for the high level of innovation in the telecommunications terminal equipment sector. For more information, please visit [www.vtke.eu](http://www.vtke.eu).*