

Press Release

Survey on free choice of end device at the internet connection

## Majority wants end to compulsory routers

6 May 2021 • It is important for the majority of consumers in Austria to be able to decide for themselves which device they can use at their internet connection. This is the result of a representative survey. Up until now, however, the lack of a clear legal regulation has often prevented the use of one's own terminal device directly at the broadband connection. This is problematic, not least when it comes to protecting the home network and personal data. The provisions in the new Telecommunications Act, which will probably be discussed and passed in the National Council before the summer, will therefore be decisive.



A clear majority would like to be able to decide for themselves which router they use at their internet connection. This is the result of a representative survey commissioned by VTKE member AVM. Almost two out of three consumers in Austria (62%) find it important or very important that their internet or network provider should no longer be able to make devices mandatory. In their opinion, the providers should be obliged to provide the necessary internet access data. For only 12 percent would freedom of choice for end

devices be "somewhat unimportant" or "completely unimportant". More than a third of all consumers (34 percent) would even make immediate use of the free choice of terminal devices and use their own router. With just under 4 million private households in Austria, this would amount to around 1.3 million private lines.

### Free choice of terminal device is important for best possible protection of own data

At present, the decision as to which devices can be operated directly at the internet connection lies with the respective provider. In contrast to mobile networks, where end customers can decide for themselves which device they want to use, many Austrians are therefore limited to what their provider offers. In addition, depending on the definition of the network termination point (NTP), the terminal device does not belong to the private network, meaning it's possible for the provider to access it. The best possible protection of sensitive data is only possible if the terminal device is officially located in the private rather than the public network.



## **New Telecommunications Act in the National Council of decisive importance**

The political guidelines on the definition of the network termination point in the new Telecommunications Act, which is to be discussed and passed by the National Council this summer, will be of decisive importance. The network termination point is the point at which the operator's network ends and that of the customer begins. In EU countries such as Germany and Italy, the network ends at the socket on the wall. The Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC) also recommends the so-called passive network termination point in its guidelines. In this case, consumers can use the terminal device of their choice directly at the internet connection.

In Austria, where there is as of yet no clear legal definition of the network termination point, some providers interpret the modem as part of their network. If a user wants to use their own router in this case, they have to operate it behind the provider's compulsory modem – and thus two devices. This leads to higher costs and additional power consumption. In addition, this means it is often not possible to use all of the chosen router's functions.

## **A clear legal definition would be in the interests of consumers**

If the network termination point in Austria is clearly and unambiguously defined as a "the socket on the wall" in line with European regulatory requirements, every end customer in Austria will be able to decide for themselves in the future whether they want to use a terminal device provided by the network operator at their own broadband connection – or one that better meets their requirements in terms of quality and functionality – for example when working from home. As the current survey shows, there is a strong desire for an end to compulsory routers in Austria.

[As part of the representative survey, 1,050 people in Austria were interviewed by media agency pilot on behalf of AVM GmbH in March 2021].

## ***About the VTKE***

*The **Alliance of Telecommunications Terminal Equipment Manufacturers (VTKE)** is made up of primarily medium-sized companies operating in Europe who have joined forces together. The Alliance was founded in 2013 and today has more than 20 member companies. Together they are committed to securing the long-term success of a liberalized telecommunications market. Particular attention is paid to the market for terminal equipment. The goal is to ensure that both users and manufacturers of telecommunications terminal equipment are able to make the most of the opportunities offered by a liberalized telecommunications market. In particular, the Alliance is committed to preserving or - where necessary - restoring the freedom of choice of terminal equipment. Every user should be able to decide which terminal devices they want to use at their connection. Find out more at [www.vtke.eu](http://www.vtke.eu)*



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