



Alliance of Telecommunications Terminal Equipment Manufacturers (VTKE)
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Press Release

Amendment to Telecommunications Act: Telecommunications terminal manufacturers welcome new law that confirms router-freedom for fiber optics

Berlin, 7 May 2021 • Manufacturers of routers, phones, telephone systems and other telecommunications terminal equipment see the new Telecommunications Modernization Act as confirmation of the free choice of terminal equipment in Germany. Following the Bundestag, the Bundesrat also approved the amendment to the Telecommunications Act today. In the future, users will continue to be able to choose their own terminal device for their broadband connection (e.g., fiber, cable, DSL or mobile). The passive wall socket as a network termination point applies regardless of the broadband technology and thus also for fiber optic connections. From the point of view of the Alliance of Telecommunications Terminal Equipment Manufacturers (VTKE), the Federal Network Agency (BNetzA) is required to ensure that freedom of choice of terminal equipment is implemented. Fiber optic providers in particular do not comply with the legal requirements and do not allow consumers' own terminal devices to be used at the passive network termination point.

Possibility of exception must remain an exception

The VTKE also warns that the new option included in the act to allow exceptions to the passive network termination point will de facto abolish freedom of choice of terminal equipment again. Network operators can apply for exceptions to the network termination point by means of a general ruling via the Federal Network Agency. There are no technical reasons that require exceptions to the passive network termination point. The positive experience with terminal device freedom – regardless of broadband technology – confirms this.

Exceptions could also circumvent the consumer's right to a free choice of terminal device. Switching providers would become more difficult because consumers would then no longer be able to use their end device freely wherever they want. This is not in the interests of consumer protection, freedom of choice of terminal equipment, or competition for more innovation.

Router freedom: A success story

Freedom of choice of terminal equipment has proven itself. Since the restoration of the free choice of end devices in 2016, many consumers have made use of their rights and millions have opted to buy their own terminal device from retailers. This gives them control over the full range of internet and telephony services and fast updates for their terminal devices. In addition, they save on the usually high rental charges that come with mandatory provider devices.



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 telecommunications 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

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