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Press Release

**Five years of router freedom**

## **Survey: Strong desire for independence among consumers – freedom of choice in Europe**

**Berlin, 22 July 2021 • For 80 percent of consumers in Germany, freedom of choice over the terminal device on their internet connection is of particular importance. Almost every second consumer makes the decision to purchase a device from a retailer or online. This was the result of a representative survey+ conducted by the Alliance of Telecommunications Terminal Equipment Manufacturers (VTKE). After five years, freedom of choice of terminal equipment is proving to be a successful model that will secure future innovation and enable users to use high-performance devices such as routers, phones or alarm systems. In other European countries, such as Italy, Finland, Austria, and the Netherlands, the free choice of end device has also been introduced or is in the process of being voted on in parliament.**

In the survey, around 80 percent of participants said that freedom of choice when using an end device was important to them. In addition, the desire for independence manifests itself when deciding whether a device is to be purchased from a retailer or a provider. The desire to own a device has almost doubled in five years. Almost one in two respondents (44 percent) said they were currently considering buying their own device from a retailer. 37 percent would like to obtain their terminal device from their provider. Five years ago, a survey showed that a good one in four (27 percent) would opt to buy their own router. At that time, 42 percent opted for a device from their provider. In the current survey, the participants were again asked about connecting and setting up their router. 60 percent of those surveyed have connected a router at home in the last six months and describe the process as easy.

### **European guidelines for terminal device freedom**

Last year, the European regulatory authorities – for Germany the Federal Network Agency – jointly determined that the private home network should generally begin at the connection socket on the wall. The definition of this "passive network termination point" enables consumers to choose their terminal equipment freely in any network (e.g., fiber, cable or DSL). In these countries this guideline is being followed or it is currently being consulted on politically:

- Germany: Free choice of terminal equipment has existed since 1 August 2016.
- Finland: Free choice of terminal equipment was introduced in 2014.
- Italy: Since 2018, users have been able to freely choose their terminal device.
- Netherlands: A regulation on the network termination point is set to be published this summer.



Austria: In the course of the passing of a new telecommunications act, the question of the definition of the network termination point and thus the restoration of free choice of terminal equipment is also being discussed.

### **Five years of terminal device freedom for diversity in the market**

On 1 August 2016 the "ISP lock", and with it compulsory routers, was abolished by law in Germany. Since then, internet users in Germany have once again been free to choose the terminal device that suits them for all access technologies – DSL, cable, fiber optics, mobile broadband – from retailers or providers.

*Source: VTKE survey conducted by market research institute Kantar from 30 June to 7 July 2021 / 1051 respondents aged 16 to 65 in Germany.*

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