



Alliance of Telecommunications Terminal Equipment Manufacturers (VTKE)
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PRESS RELEASE

Court confirms decision on network termination point:

The path to free choice of terminal equipment in Belgium is clear

11 June 2024 - There are no legal or technical reasons against free choice of telecommunications terminal equipment for fiber optic, DSL and cable connections. This has been shown by a recent ruling by the Court of Appeal in Brussels. A few months ago, the network operator Orange Belgium appealed against the decision of the Belgian regulatory authority to define the network termination point and to thus introduce “router freedom”. Freedom of choice of terminal equipment can now come into force as planned from 1 November 2024 and Belgian users can use a terminal device of their choosing directly on their broadband connection.

Neither legal nor technical reasons speak against freedom of choice of terminal equipment

In September 2023, the Belgian regulatory authority BIPT (Belgian Institute for Postal Services and Telecommunications) published a decision defining the network termination point at the “connection socket to the line”. This paved the way for technology-neutral freedom of choice of terminal equipment in Belgium. At the end of last year, Orange Belgium lodged an appeal against this with the competent court in Brussels and demanded, among other things, the abolition of the definition of the network for fiber optic and cable connections.

The Belgian Court of Appeal has now rejected this demand in its judgement. Once again it is clear that there are no legal or technical reasons against free choice of terminal equipment directly at the fiber optic, DSL or cable connection.

On the contrary, freedom of choice of terminal equipment ensures that users have sovereignty over their terminal equipment. In addition, more competition in the market for terminal devices leads to more innovation and a wider range of products from which consumers can choose the one that best meets their needs.

Belgium follows other countries with free choice of end device from 1 November

The court ruling means that from 1 November, all Belgian providers will also have to offer their customers the option of using their own device directly on the broadband connection. Consumers who wish to continue using the provider's device will still be able to do so.

In the European Union, the right to free choice of terminal equipment has already existed for several years on the basis of the Net Neutrality Regulation. Belgium is now joining the list of countries that have made freedom of choice of terminal equipment binding by regulating the network termination point at the “connection socket to the line”. These include Germany, Finland, Greece, Italy, Croatia and the Netherlands.



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About the VTKE

The Alliance of Telecommunications Terminal Equipment Manufacturers (VTKE) consists mainly of medium-sized companies operating in Europe. Together, they are committed to ensuring the long-term success of a liberalised telecommunications market. The VTKE also aims to raise awareness of the importance of telecommunications terminal equipment in politics and society. Furthermore, the Alliance is committed to a stable, forward-looking regulatory and economic framework, as this is the basis for the high innovative strength of the telecommunications terminal equipment industry. Further information can be found at www.vtke.eu.