



Press release

Bonn, 29 May 2018

Bundesnetzagentur celebrates 20th anniversary

Jochen Homann: "20 years of responsibility for networks"

The Bundesnetzagentur has today marked its 20th anniversary with an event in Bonn to which representatives of politics and business were invited. Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel gave the anniversary address.

"We started out 20 years ago as a regulatory authority. Today, we are the most important infrastructure authority in Germany," explained Jochen Homann, Bundesnetzagentur President. "We're celebrating 20 years of being responsible for critical networks, with competition providing the impetus."

Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Energy Peter Altmaier said, *"The Bundesnetzagentur will continue supporting the federal government to create a framework for high-performance networks equally based on investment and competition, and thus for a bright future for our country."*

As the Mayor of Bonn, I am delighted that such an important higher federal authority with many skilled jobs and forward-looking fields of activity is based in our city. It makes a major contribution to Bonn's profile as the second political centre of Germany," stressed Ashok Sridharan, Mayor of Bonn. "For that reason, the Bundesnetzagentur's continued development is close to my heart. My colleagues from the surrounding areas and I are committed to upholding Bonn's position in the future, as laid down in the Berlin-Bonn Act, and continuing the successful structural transformation."

Origins of the authority and change of name

The Regulatory Authority for Telecommunications and Post was founded in 1998 in the course of the liberalisation of the postal and telecommunications markets. It ensures there is competition on these markets and undertakes statutory duties such as allocating numbers, awarding spectrum and dealing with radio frequency interference.

Bundesnetzagentur
Tulpenfeld 4
53113 Bonn

bundesnetzagentur.de
twitter.com/bnetza

Press contact person:

Fiete Wulff
Head of Press and Public
Relations

Tel. +49 228 14 - 9921
pressestelle@bnetza.de



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In 2005, it was given the name Bundesnetzagentur and gained additional responsibilities regulating electricity and gas markets. Rail regulation was added to its role in 2006.

As a result of the German energy transition, the Bundesnetzagentur has been responsible for the approval of electricity networks and tasks relating to the security of electricity supply since 2011.

The Bundesnetzagentur's ruling chambers decide on many matters in quasi-judicial proceedings, ensuring that the often divergent interests of companies are reconciled in independent decisions.

20 years ago the Bundesnetzagentur had 2,800 members of staff. Now, despite a greatly increased workload, that figure is 2,900, based at 48 sites across the country.

Presidents and milestones of the Bundesnetzagentur

The founding President of the authority, Professor Klaus-Dieter Scheurle, recalled, *"The most important decisions made by the agency in the first three years included ensuring fair, non-discriminatory access to the local loop, the so-called last mile, and thus opening up the local network to competition."*

Scheurle added, *"The UMTS auction in summer 2000 definitely made us known to the general public. Six mobile communications companies acquired licences at a cost of nearly one hundred billion marks. For us, however, the priority was not the amount paid but ensuring that the spectrum would be used to its full potential. Our aim was to create good networks for consumers."*

Matthias Kurth became President in 2001 and led the authority for over eleven years.

"The real task in the early years was that of opening up the market. Mobile communications were the key to that, as they developed in a significantly more competitive way than the fixed network sector at the start," said Kurth of his memories of the telecommunications sector.

"At the start of energy regulation we caused a stir with our very first cost examination. We adjusted the valuation of the fixed assets of the regional monopolists downwards by billions. This first positioning resulted in considerable reductions in the network charges," Kurth added.



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He summed up by recalling, *"We fought hard to open up the market in all areas, even though the established companies often really dug their heels in. Over the years, the Bundesnetzagentur has become the independent arbitrator of the networks."*

Jochen Homann succeeded Kurth in 2012 as the third President, having previously held the post of State Secretary responsible for energy, industry, technology and foreign trade policy at the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs.

"The political decision to undertake the energy transition has left the energy sector facing one of its biggest ever challenges. Against the background of these complex, conflicting priorities, we make sure that the whole system is functioning," said Homann.

"Giving approval for the electricity lines is a completely new task for us. That shows how dynamically our authority has developed. We are also entering completely new territory in the network expansion as far as communication is concerned, talking directly to residents, representatives of civil society and local authorities, making the case for power lines and ultimately deciding on their routes," added Homann.

Anniversary publication, film and images

You can find more information on the history of the Bundesnetzagentur, a publication and film about the anniversary as well as images on our website at www.bundesnetzagentur.de/20jahre.

The Bundesnetzagentur is an authority under the responsibility of the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy. Its core tasks include supervising the energy, telecommunications, postal and railway markets.

As part of its mandate, the Bundesnetzagentur ensures that as many undertakings as possible can use the infrastructure in these sectors so that consumers benefit from competition and favourable prices.

The authority employs over 2,900 people at its headquarters in Bonn, its other main sites in Mainz and Saarbrücken, and its 46 regional offices.