



Press release

Bonn, 10 January 2020

End of the period for meeting the coverage obligations of the 2015 auction

Network operators submit coverage reports – Bundesnetzagentur to carry out critical review

The mobile network operators Telefónica Germany GmbH & Co. OHG, Telekom Deutschland GmbH and Vodafone GmbH have presented their reports on meeting the coverage obligations from the 2015 auction. The Bundesnetzagentur will now check the submissions.

“We will do everything in our power to ensure that the companies quickly rectify any shortcomings in meeting their obligations that we identify. Our goal is to have the mobile broadband rollout in both rural and urban areas move ahead as fast as possible. We will not exclude the possibility of regulatory sanctions. However, the Bundesnetzagentur will only make use of these if they serve the purpose of improving supply,” said Jochen Homann President of the Bundesnetzagentur.

The companies' submissions

According to their own statements, Telekom and Vodafone have generally met the requirements for household supply. Telefónica, however, stated that it was not able to meet the coverage requirements set by the Bundesnetzagentur by the deadline but the company expects to meet the requirements by the end of the year.

According to the mobile network operators' reports, it was not possible to provide full coverage of the main transport routes by the end of the year.

The mobile network operators give external factors as the reasons for the delays, such as a lack of willingness to rent at potential locations, a lack of building permits, and the protection of historic monuments, nature and the environment. Moreover, the mobile network operators refer to the different legal perspectives on the coverage obligation, which at present are the subject of legal proceedings.

Telefónica additionally points to factors specific to the company itself, which have likewise led to delays in the network expansion. However, it is planned to meet the coverage obligations by a further 7,600 locations before the end of the year.

Spectrum in the 700 MHz band that had to be vacated by broadcasting has only been fully available since mid-2019. Since then, the companies have accelerated the pace of expansion significantly.

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The information provided by the mobile network operators on coverage in the individual federal states and nationwide can be found on the Bundesnetzagentur's website at www.bundesnetzagentur.de/mobilesbreitband.

Verification by the Bundesnetzagentur

The Bundesnetzagentur is currently checking the information provided by the mobile network operators and will carry out its own tests in each federal state. The radio monitoring and inspection service of the Bundesnetzagentur will investigate whether the coverage notified by the mobile network operators is actually available. These tests will be carried out over several weeks.

As part of the overall review, the Bundesnetzagentur will then decide whether the coverage obligation has been met and will examine any measures that need to be taken.

Background to the coverage obligation

The Bundesnetzagentur imposed conditions on the frequency assignments auctioned in 2015 to the effect that the mobile network operators had to ensure supply as of 1 January 2020 of a minimum transmission rate of 50 MBit/s per sector to 98% of households nationwide and 97% of households in each federal state. In addition, the main transport routes were to receive full coverage.

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 and Mainz and its 46 regional offices.