Bundesnetzagentur

Press release

Bundesnetzagentur publishes report on the use of artificial intelligence in the network sectors

The Bundesnetzagentur has today published a report on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in the network sectors.

"*There are numerous areas of application for AI with excellent potential for adding value. Using AI, especially for improving quality and gaining efficiency, also creates opportunities for more sustainability in the network sectors. We must take advantage of the current dynamics and set the right course with regard to regulation,*" said Dr Wilhelm Eschweiler, Bundesnetzagentur Vice President.

Survey on the use of AI

The report contains initial results from the consultation on the use of AI in the telecommunications, electricity, gas, post and rail network sectors. Currently 55% of the consultation participants already use AI. For now there is still a big difference between small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and large companies. While 78% of the participating large companies already use AI, only 22% of the participating SMEs do.

As the market dialogue shows, AI can contribute significantly to the optimisation and automation of business processes and help to develop entirely new business models and applications.

Challenges

The use of AI not only creates opportunities but also comes with challenges for companies.

In addition to a shortage of skilled workers and the complexity of the algorithms, the lack of a legal framework is seen in all network sectors and regardless of company size as a key obstacle to the use of AI. SMEs in

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

particular fear that the implementation of future AI regulations could be costly.

Future AI legal framework

The EU Commission's legislative proposal for a pan-European legal framework for AI already addresses many of the questions that were examined in the market consultation and workshop. The Bundesnetzagentur welcomes the aims of the Commission's proposal and will be closely following future negotiations.

Market dialogue

In April 2021 the Bundesnetzagentur began a market dialogue with companies and associations from the network sectors. The first step was a market consultation. The Bundesnetzagentur also organised a virtual workshop on AI in the network sectors that took place on 11 November 2021. Results of the consultation, the EU Commission's legislative proposal for a legal framework for AI and AI use cases in the network sectors were presented and discussed. The Bundesnetzagentur would like to continue the market dialogue that began this year with the stakeholders in the network sectors as a point of contact offering support. This is also particularly important for SMEs.

The Bundesnetzagentur has published the report on the market dialogue on the use of AI in the network sectors in German at www.bundesnetzagentur.de/ki. In addition to the report, recordings of the workshop sessions on AI in the network sectors are also available.

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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.