



Press release

Bonn, 22.09.2022

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Position paper for the award of mobile spectrum

Klaus Müller: "Bundesnetzagentur wants to manage balancing act between competition and coverage."

The Bundesnetzagentur has today published a position paper on the future award of certain mobile spectrum.

"We want to manage the balancing act between competition and coverage. With the proposal of a spectrum swap we want to balance the interests of established mobile operators and market entrants. The existing LTE coverage is to be maintained and at the same time, we want to grant equal access to spectrum. The number one rule is that the procedure should be fair and transparent. Now market participants have to step up," said Klaus Müller, President of the Bundesnetzagentur.

Assignments of usage rights for important mobile spectrum in the 800 MHz, 1 800 MHz and 2 600 MHz bands expire at the end of 2025, so the Bundesnetzagentur needs to decide quickly on the future provision of this spectrum.

The Bundesnetzagentur's position paper sets out its initial assessment of the next steps. Given the indication of spectrum scarcity, the Bundesnetzagentur favours award proceedings, namely an auction.

Non-discriminatory procedure with proposed spectrum swap

The Bundesnetzagentur is proposing a spectrum swap in the 800 MHz band to accommodate the interests of all market participants.

This would involve the usage rights at 800 MHz not expiring until the end of 2033, rather than at the end of 2025. The usage rights at 900 MHz, meanwhile, would expire at the end of 2025 rather than at the end of 2033. The 900 MHz spectrum would then be awarded instead of the 800 MHz spectrum. Such a swap would secure the existing LTE coverage on the basis

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of the 800 MHz spectrum for the longer term, while also giving new entrants an opportunity to receive spectrum below 1 GHz.

Providing impetus for competition and better broadband coverage

The Bundesnetzagentur wants to provide impetus for further improvements in broadband coverage. There will be a greater focus on the perspective of users. In the position paper, the Bundesnetzagentur presents a series of proven and new measures.

The paper also considers competition at the service level. Considerations on different instruments are put up for discussion here, too.

The Bundesnetzagentur is presenting the position paper for public consultation. Responses may be submitted until 21 November 2022.

Background

The current spectrum usage rights in the bands at 800 MHz, 1 800 MHz and 2 600 MHz will expire at the end of 2025. The aim now is to set the best course for providing the spectrum for use from 2026.

In summer 2020 the Bundesnetzagentur had opened up the dialogue when it published its "Spectrum compass" for consultation with a view to creating legal and planning certainty for all the market players at an early stage about how the spectrum would be made available again.

This was followed by the public consultation on its principles and scenarios for the provision of the 800 MHz, 1 800 MHz and 2 600 MHz spectrum in summer 2021.

More detail on the Bundesnetzagentur's plans was then provided in the points of orientation, published in January 2022. Stakeholders were also able to comment on these and companies were able to submit their forecast spectrum requirements.



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The responses received were taken into account in the position paper published today.

The position paper is available at
www.bundesnetzagentur.de/mobilesbreitband.

The Bundesnetzagentur für Elektrizität, Gas, Telekommunikation, Post und Eisenbahnen is an independent higher federal authority with its main office in Bonn and is under the responsibility of the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK). Some of its areas of activity fall under the substantive supervision of the Federal Ministry for Digital and Transport (BMDV).