



Press release
20 November 2009

3V/m: Mobistar and KPN Group Belgium react to ministerial press release

Brussels, 20 November 2009 – Mobile operators Mobistar and KPN Group Belgium react to the press release issued by Minister Huytebroeck concerning the executory decisions on the 3V/metre standard. Some erroneous information contained in this release needs to be corrected. For Brussels, Capital of Europe, set to take over the Presidency of the European Union, the delay in implementing the new standard will cause serious harm to the liberalisation of telecoms. Furthermore, the alleged health issues have still not been scientifically proven.

The compliance procedure for existing sites and the procedure for deploying the networks is dependent upon Bruxelles Environnement (the Brussels Environment Agency) implementing an appropriate measuring system. Since no such system exists at present, one will still need to be developed and tested. Consequently, the Region cannot issue any licenses declaring compliance with the standard, as a result of which network deployment is blocked.

Another important point is that, on the eve of its European Presidency, Belgium will no longer be capable of ensuring fair competition in the mobile telephony market in the Capital of Europe. Because the Brussels ministers for the environment and urban planning have not taken timely action, it has not been possible for Mobistar or KPN Group Belgium to install any antennas in the capital since January 2009. The development of their 3G network by Mobistar and KPN Group Belgium has been halted, and this favours the incumbent operator: Proximus has, in fact, already been able to complete the construction of its 3G network due to its precedence in the market and some privileges it has been granted, which gives it a certain competitive advantage. This advantage will continue indefinitely because Mobistar and KPN Group Belgium do not have a clear idea of when they will be allowed to finalise the construction of their 3G network.

To date, there is no formal scientific proof that electromagnetic waves have any harmful effects on health and the environment. On the contrary: in August 2009, ICNIRP/WHO¹ issued a statement² on the basic restrictions it had set in 1998, declaring that there was no indication that the exposure limits needed to be reviewed immediately. The Brussels standard is 200 times more severe than the ICNIRP/WHO recommendation. Recently, the Nordic health authorities published an interesting report on this topic³.

¹ International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection: non-governmental organisation referenced by the World Health Organisation (WHO), the International Labour Organisation and the European Commission.

² <http://www.icnirp.de/documents/StatementEMF.pdf>

³ Joint statement from the Nordic Radiation Safety Authorities – Exposure of the general public to radiofrequency electromagnetic fields. http://www.stuk.fi/stuk/tiedotteet/en_GB/news_578/

Politicians must also inform the people of Brussels that lowering the emission standards will lead to a substantial increase in the number of antennas in order to ensure the continuity of the mobile telephony service across the territory of the Brussels Region.

One can also question why radio/tv masts are not subject to the same legal framework in the Brussels Region and, in contradiction to the precautionary principle put forward by some, these masts do not enter into consideration when issues surrounding health and the environment are discussed, even though their emission levels are much higher.

Lastly, when concluding that *"By enacting this standard, and by furthering in parallel a concerted approach with the various telephone operators, the Brussels Region is now the most advanced city in Europe. In doing so, the Region is making the precautionary principle and respect for health two key priorities"*, the Minister omits to mention that the dialogue with the operators has not led to a common agreement and that the current approach of the Minister endangers technological development.

KPN Group Belgium nv/sa is a 100% subsidiary of Koninklijke KPN N.V. KPN offers mobile voice and data services in Germany (E-Plus and its sister brands), Belgium (BASE and its sister brands) and the Netherlands (KPN, Hi and Telfort). At the end of September 2009, KPN Group Belgium had 718 employees. In 2008, KPN Group Belgium had a yearly turnover of 647 million euro and a market share in number of mobile customers of ca. 24%. The company's headquarters are in Brussels; it positions itself as an innovator in products and services via a segmented, multibranded approach. KPN Group Belgium commercializes the brands BASE, Ay Yildiz, Simyo, Zoniq and BASE business.

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Mobistar (EURONEXT BRUSSELS: MOBB), one of the main players in the Belgian and Luxembourg telecommunications markets, is active in the mobile and fixed telephony markets, in adsl and in other markets with substantial growth potential. The company develops innovative products and services for the residential and professional markets. Mobistar is listed on the Brussels Stock Exchange and is part of the France Télécom Group.

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