

BELGIAN INSTITUTE FOR POSTAL SERVICES AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

PRESS RELEASE

Proximus/Fiberklaar and Telenet/Wyre intend to cooperate to roll out optical fibre in Flanders

Brussels, 26 July 2024 – Proximus and Telenet announced to have signed a draft agreement in order to cooperate to roll out fibre optic networks (“Fiber-to-the-Home”, or FTTH) in a part of Flanders. The Belgian Competition Authority has decided to initiate an investigation into this possible cooperation. The BIPT will be collaborating closely on this investigation. The decision of the Belgian Competition Authority will be an important factor for BIPT’s next market analysis.

On 10 October 2023 the BIPT published a communication on the cooperative roll-out of FTTH networks. In that communication, the BIPT had announced that if operators reach agreements complying with a number of principles, it would take these agreements into account in its next market analysis (in collaboration with the media regulators) in order to assess the need for regulation and/or the form that regulation should take.

In this context, Proximus and Fiberklaar on one hand, as well as Telenet and Wyre on the other hand have announced the signing of a memorandum of understanding providing for both the sharing between them of the roll-out of FTTH in medium-density areas in Flanders and reciprocal access to their respective networks in these areas. Following the signature of this memorandum, the Belgian Competition Authority has decided to open an investigation (see the press release of the Belgian Competition Authority of 26 July 2024).

The BIPT will be collaborating closely with the Belgian Competition Authority and will provide it with its technical expertise and knowledge of the electronic communications sector. The BIPT will, in particular, ensure that the principles listed in its communication of 10 October 2023 are met, namely: the opening up of the networks to third-party operators, a high level of transparency and non-discrimination, wholesale tariffs reflecting the reality of a single infrastructure, ambitions in terms of coverage and timetable at least equal to what was planned in the absence of cooperation.

If the operators reach a final agreement that meets the conditions expressed by the BIPT and the Belgian Competition Authority, it will likely no longer be necessary to regulate the wholesale broadband markets, at least in the area concerned by the cooperation.

The preparatory work for the next market analysis will take into account the prospect of this agreement

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