

## BELGIAN INSTITUTE FOR POSTAL SERVICES AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

### PRESS RELEASE

#### **BIPT outlines the consequences of the destruction of GSM masts**

Brussels, 20 April 2020 – Mobile operators install their masts at well-defined locations in our landscape in order to provide the Belgian population with maximum coverage and thus a maximum accessibility indoors and outdoors.

Encouraging the destruction of masts and damaging them are both punishable offences. The perpetrators are liable for damage caused to operators but also to third parties. Furthermore, the damage represents a threat to the use of mobile services by the inhabitants of that area and the passersby. As a matter of fact, the damaged connectivity could make it difficult to call emergency and essential services (doctors, hospitals, police, fire brigades, anti-poison service, suicide prevention service, domestic violence call line...). It could also jeopardise the orderly functioning of emergency services which can use the location data when a caller is in distress and is, for instance, unable to communicate his or her location.

Damaging mobile equipment is particularly irresponsible in the context of the current lockdown period, during which it is more important than ever to keep in touch with our families and loved ones, to be able to contact emergency services and to continue to participate in the economic and social life.

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