



BELGIAN INSTITUTE FOR POSTAL SERVICES AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

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PRESS RELEASE

BIPT publishes a telecommunications services quality barometer

Brussels, 13 October 2016 - BIPT publishes a telecommunications services quality barometer. The tool, which is online as of today, consists of several indicators relating to the various operators' performance. By publishing this quality of service barometer BIPT hopes to create more transparency and thus to enable consumers to make better-informed choices as to the quality of telecommunications services and to encourage operators to take measures in order to improve their quality of service.

In its daily action BIPT monitors the development of competition based on quality, price and innovation in the electronic communications, postal and media sectors. One of the strategic objectives in the field of electronic communications is to ensure a reliable and high-quality digital environment. BIPT specifically wishes to improve transparency regarding the network and services quality.

To that end BIPT has first put **an atlas** of the fixed and mobile networks coverage online. These maps, which are published on its website and regularly updated, enable consumers and public authorities to monitor the evolution of fixed and mobile networks in Belgium.

To complement its coverage atlas BIPT has published a **quality of service barometer**. The barometer should enable consumers to compare the operators' performance and to encourage the latter to improve the quality of their services.

The barometer, which is online as of today, comprises several indicators relating to the performance of the various operators: (1) keeping the appointment made for the installation, (2) percentage of complaints about the initial functioning of an installation, (3) percentage of failures and malfunctions, (4) repair time for failures or malfunctions, (5) response time of the operator's customer assistance services ("helpdesk"), (6) percentage of problems submitted to the customer assistance service solved after a single contact, (7) complaints concerning billing and (8) mobile networks coverage. Consumers can now compare those quality of service aspects of the providers, concerning the (fixed and mobile) telephone, Internet and television services. By doing so, BIPT also hopes to encourage operators, if necessary, to take measures in order to improve their quality of service.

The operators' data follow a common frame of reference laid down in a BIPT decision based on criteria that depend on international quality standards. Throughout the validation process BIPT has made every effort to minimise the sources of differences and to maximise the comparability of the indicators among operators. In spite of the fact that a common frame of reference is applied, even if the comparison of these indicators

is relevant for a given operator over time, it can be more difficult to compare certain indicators between different operators because of differences in organisation, working method and information system.

The results of the barometer show that the service providers keep the appointments made for the activation of the services in 95% of the cases. As regards failures the barometer shows that on average 6.4% of the lines are affected in the course of the first half-year and that 95% of the failures are repaired within 180 days. The average response time of the helpdesk is 55 seconds, whereas 82% of calls are answered within 2 minutes maximum. Finally, an average of 0.4% of the invoices leads to billing complaints, which still represent one of the main sources of complaints submitted to the office of the Telecommunications Ombudsman.

Not all customers are in the same boat as far as the quality of service is concerned. The values of the indicators gathered in the quality of service barometer may indeed sometimes vary significantly among the various providers. By publishing this quality of service barometer BIPT hopes to create more transparency and thus to enable consumers to make better-informed choices and to encourage providers to take the necessary measures in order to improve their performance.

Vice-premier and Minister of Development Cooperation, Digital Agenda, Telecom and Post Alexander De Croo:

“Consumers now have more insight into the quality of service provided by the operators which makes it easier to choose a subscription. In addition the operators are encouraged to increase their quality of service by publishing this information. For there are different action points to improve the service even more such as indicating a correct installation date upon concluding a new contract and a swifter repair of interruptions.”

Jack Hamande, Chairman of the BIPT Council:

“The publication of the quality barometer constitutes an additional and important step in creating transparency on the telecom market. BIPT will continue to devote itself to encourage operators to provide qualitative and competitive telecom services necessary to support our country’s digital economy.”

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