Five Dutch operators buy into 2.6 GHz band

April 26 2010

Visitors walk past Vodafone exhibition stand walls at the CeBIT fair on March 2010 in Germany. Five mobile operators, including Vodafone, now own portions of the Netherlands' new 2.6 Gigahertz frequency band, which allows for super-fast broadband, the Dutch telecommunications agency announced Monday.

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An online auction closed Monday with operators Ziggo, Tele 2, KPN, Vodafone and T-Mobile, acquiring frequency space for a total amount of 2.6 million euros (3.5 million dollars), it said in a statement.

"An important aim in issuing these licences is for the consumer to have as wide a choice as possible in (broadband) mobile communications," the agency, an entity of the economic ministry, said in a statement.

With the licences, valid until 2030, the agency said operators obtained frequencies in the 2.6 GHz band, "which is suitable for 4G" transmission, up to 10 times faster than existing options.

The newly licenced operators are obliged to roll out a network within two years, the statement said.

4G will allow users to receive multimedia such as TV broadcasts, web conferencing and online games at rates much faster then the current generation of networks.

Nordic telecom operator TeliaSonera in December announced the launch in Stockholm and Oslo of the world's first commercial 4G/LTE mobile network.

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Citation: Five Dutch operators buy into 2.6 GHz band (2010, April 26) retrieved 27 April 2024 from https://phys.org/news/2010-04-dutch-ghz-band.html