

Germany to require suppliers of 5G networks be 'trustworthy'

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People walk past a Huawei retail shop in Shenzhen, China's Guangdong province, Thursday, March 7, 2019. Chinese tech giant Huawei is challenging a U.S. law that labels the company a security risk and would limit its access to the American market for telecom equipment. (AP Photo/Kin Cheung)

German authorities published a list of security requirements for telecoms networks Thursday, amid concerns about the possible involvement of China's Huawei in future 5G infrastructure.

The United States has been lobbying for allied countries and companies to block Huawei from providing equipment for fifth-generation cell networks, claiming it could facilitate digital espionage by the Chinese government.

Germany has made clear in recent weeks that it doesn't plan to pre-emptively exclude specific companies from bidding for contracts, but instead wants to set minimum standards that all suppliers have to meet.

According to the new guidelines published by Germany's Economic Ministry and the Federal Network Agency, systems for networks including 5G "may only be sourced from trustworthy suppliers whose compliance with national security regulations and provisions for the secrecy of telecommunications and for data protection is assured."

Other "key elements" are that network traffic "must be regularly and constantly monitored for any abnormality" and security-related components have to be certified by Germany's IT security agency.

The guidelines also stipulate that networks should use components from several manufacturers and provide for redundancy of key equipment.

The agencies said companies will have an opportunity to comment on the guidelines.

It is unclear whether Huawei would be able to fulfill the requirements as they currently stand, because as a Chinese company it may be compelled to provide authorities in the communist nation with access to its networks.

The company this week opened a cybersecurity lab in Brussels in a bid to win over European governments and already has a similar center in Bonn, Germany.

Its main rivals in the market for super-fast, 5G-network equipment are European companies Ericsson and Nokia.

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