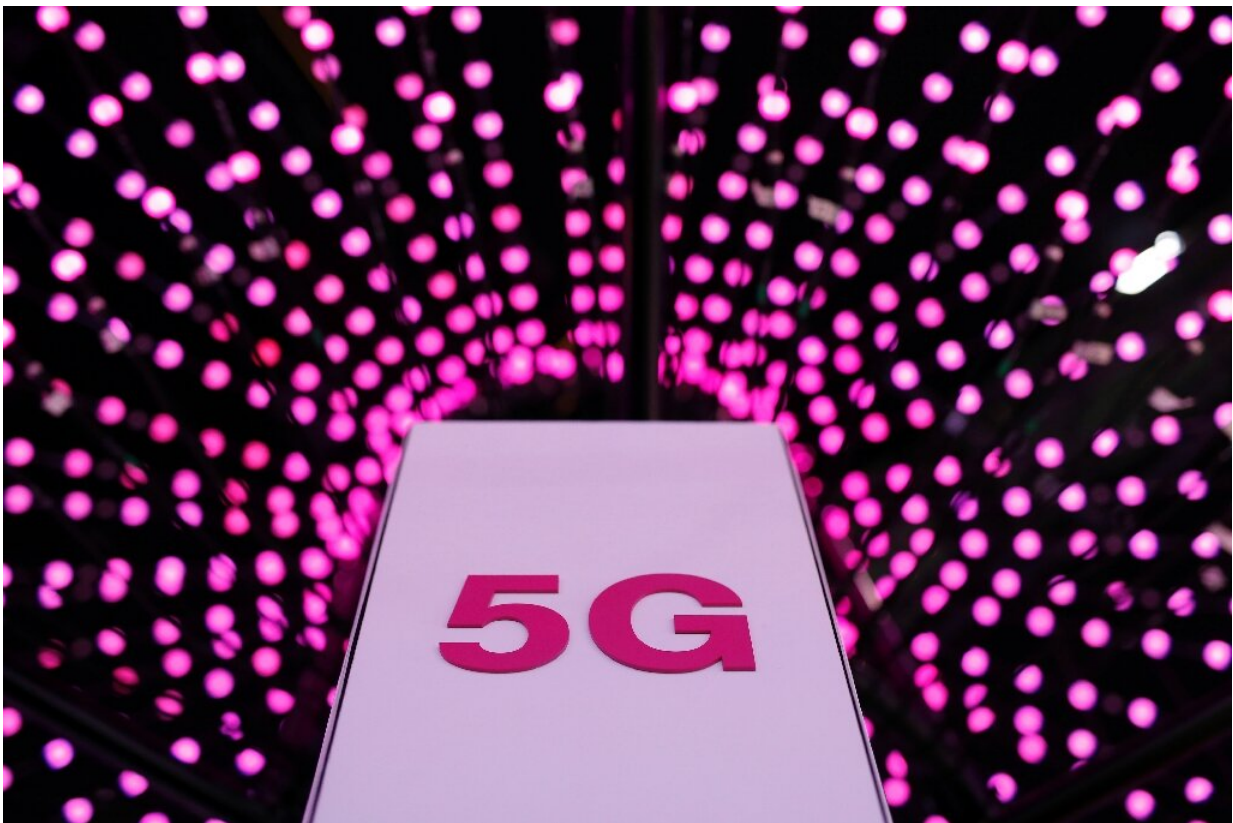


Germany raises 6.5 bn euros from sale of 5G frequencies

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Berlin will require the winning bidders to offer the service to at least 98 percent of German households and along motorways and rail lines

Germany has raised some 6.5 billion euros (\$7.3 billion) from the sale of 5G frequencies to telecoms firms, the Federal Network Agency, said

Wednesday, announcing the result of a three-month auction.

The sale far exceeded expectations of between three billion and five billion euros, and the windfall will go towards closing the digital gap in a country whose wireless networks rank only 46th in the world for download speeds.

Germany's three main mobile network providers—Deutsche Telekom, Vodafone and Telefonica Germany (O2)—and 1&1/Drillisch, which specialises in internet services, bought the 41 frequency blocks on offer, with Deutsche Telekom taking the lion's share, the network agency said in a statement.

5G is the latest high-speed generation of cellular mobile communications.

It promises radically quicker transfers of data, making possible widespread use of artificial intelligence and other high-tech advancements such as self-driving cars and "telemedicine".

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The United States has urged Berlin to bar operators from building networks on hardware from Chinese tech firm Huawei, arguing that the equipment could help Beijing spy on Western companies and governments.

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