

Germany needs more fibre

GERMANY

GERMANY is lagging behind most European countries in terms of broadband services, points out the FTTH Council, on the occasion of the IFA 2010 consumer electronics show in Berlin this week.

It needs to start deploying fibre networks straight away, if it wants to be able to provide the broadband infrastructure required for all the new internet-connected devices and services, including most of those that will be on display at IFA 2010.

The limitations of existing broadband services are already becoming apparent: "Consumers already understand and have started to complain about the 'up to' offerings available in Germany today, which cannot provide the speed advertised," says Hartwig Tauber, Director General of the FTTH Council Europe.

In Germany, only 140.000 subscribers can receive broadband through a direct fibre connection (June 2010 figures), which is less than 0.40% of the country's 40 million homes, and so a long way below the 1% threshold to join the FTTH Global Ranking, which has recently welcomed Portugal, Bulgaria and Czech Republik (*see [http://www.iteuropa.com/news/features/eastern-europe-](http://www.iteuropa.com/news/features/eastern-europe-nordics-take-lead-fibre-networks)*



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In March this year, Tauber had already warned about the situation in Germany, as well as in the UK: "The two biggest IT markets are still missing, due to their main telecom companies sitting on their gains." In Germany, "Deutsche Telekom is reacting very slowly and the competition in the German market is not very strong," he had said, although municipal authorities, utility companies and private investors have started deploying fibre.

But the situation has changed this year, when Deutsche Telekom announced plans to cover four million households in the 50 largest cities with FTTH by the end of 2012. However there is still a long way to go, especially if Germany is to meet the Federal Government's target to bring broadband at speeds of at least 50Mbps to 75% of the country by 2014. "It is necessary to start the deployment now to make sure the end-customers have the connection available in a reasonable timeframe," concludes Tauber.

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It is always a problem with a powerful incumbent; governments find themselves unable to force investment without paying for it themselves.