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FTTH Council Europe calls for broadband advertising reform

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Current 'up to' advertising is misleading for consumers, claims industry body.

By Jane McCallion, 22 Jan 2013 at 15:29



Internet service providers have been condemned for charging consumers for the potential broadband speeds they could receive.

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According to Ofcom statistics, the average advertised UK broadband speed was 15Mbps in May 2011, while the average actual speed was closer to 6.8Mbps.

Hartwig Tauber, director general of Fibre to the Home (FTTH) Council Europe, has hit out at firms that advertise "up to" speeds in this way, describing the practice as "unacceptable".

"[You would not be] happy if a supermarket charged you for a full litre of milk but when you got home the bottle was only half full. Yet broadband service providers are allowed to charge consumers for an 'up to' service, regardless of whether they can actually deliver that speed," Tauber said.

Tauber points to Denmark as an example of good practice, where operators must guarantee a minimum speed on their broadband networks.

All types of network - including mobile, copper and fibre - will be subject to this agreement, but Tauber claims more can be done.

"While we applaud the progress in Denmark, lack of transparency in broadband marketing remains a concern across the rest of Europe. How can consumers make appropriate choices about their broadband contract when the marketing information is confusing and inaccurate?" Tauber said.

He also highlighted a 2012 statement by Neelie Kroes, vice president of the digital agenda at the European Commission, where she pledged to increase transparency around broadband advertising across Europe.

"In our view, it is imperative that consumers get clear and accurate information about broadband services so they can make an informed choice," Tauber concluded.

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