

***Out with the old, in with the new:
FTTH Council Europe calls for copper switch-off strategy***

New study on Copper switch-off released at the FTTH Conference highlights:

- *Progress on copper switch-off is very diverse across Member States;*
- *Copper switch-off significantly enhances the business case for fibre; and*
- *Transition to fibre is a win-win for consumers and fibre investors.*

Amsterdam, 13 March 2019 – Today WIK released the findings of [its new study commissioned by the FTTH Council Europe](#) on copper switch-off and transition to fibre. The study analyses the different stages of copper switch-off in ten European Union Member States and identifies benefits as well as enablers, incentives, challenges and barriers to switching from copper to fibre networks.

Main findings:

A mixed picture across the European Union – Estonia, Spain and Sweden lead

We see that the process varies from one country to another, in some it's still in its infancy and in others FTTH is not yet widely deployed. In the ten Member States¹ analysed, the greatest progress has been made in Estonia, with 70% of copper exchanges closed in 2018 and plans to remove copper access for 60% of broadband subscribers by 2020. However, more progress has been made towards PSTN² switch-off which is a prerequisite and a facilitator to copper switch-off.

Benefits of copper switch-off: a win-win for consumers and operators

The study found that both end-users and fibre network operators benefit from transition to fibre and copper switch-off including:

- **Reliability:** fibre is 70%-80% more reliable than copper resulting in lower fault rates;
- **Energy efficiency:** copper switch results in 40-60% energy savings due to the lower power consumption of fibre;
- **Cost efficiency:** 40-60% lower maintenance costs;
- **Better deal for consumers:** surveyed consumers were more satisfied with fibre (82% happy vs 50% on DSL), quoted higher bandwidth, wider range of services and better value for money as key benefits.
- **Better deal for investors:** evidence suggests that clarity on copper switch off can improve the business case for fibre.

¹ Estonia, Sweden, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Netherlands, France, Germany, Poland, UK

² PSTN (public switched telephone network)

“This study about copper switch-off is of tremendous importance for the FTTH Council Europe. The telecom market is in a transitional phase, it is moving from an old copper-based infrastructure to new fibre-based networks. There is a technology change and all eyes are on 5G but we should not forget that fibre is the foundation of all technologies for connectivity. Policy is lagging behind the market developments, and it is important that it catches up.” explained **Ronan Kelly, President of the FTTH Council Europe**.

“We believe that Europe needs a single market strategy for the migration process and the ultimate switch-off of copper, therefore a European level debate on the fate of copper is needed.” added **Erzsébet Fitori, Director General of the FTTH Council Europe**.“ Our study is aimed to be a discussion starter and to bring together policy makers, copper network owners, new fibre investors and consumers to approach constructively this complex topic. Europe needs new fibre infrastructure and a very constructive dialogue amongst stakeholders. We are a keen platform for such a debate.”

About the FTTH Council Europe

The FTTH Council Europe is an industry organisation with a mission to accelerate ubiquitous full fibre-based connectivity empowering a leading Digital Society throughout Europe. The FTTH Council Europe’s vision is that fibre connectivity will transform and enhance the way we live, do business and interact, connecting everyone and everything, everywhere.

The FTTH Council Europe consists of more than 150 member companies. www.ftthcouncil.eu

[The study Copper switch-off - A European benchmark by WIK for the FTTH Council Europe can be downloaded here](#)

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