

Fibre-optic cooperation in Fribourg in jeopardy

Last Friday the Swiss Competition Commission (ComCo) published its final report on fibre-optic cooperation in the canton of Fribourg. After examining the report, Groupe E and Swisscom are convinced that implementation of the planned joint venture is in jeopardy. Both partners are keen to continue discussions with ComCo in order to quickly find a solution. Without a joint solution there is a risk that expansion of the fibre-optic network in the cantons of Fribourg and Neuchâtel and in part of the canton of Vaud may have to be stopped.

After examining the case for 17 months, ComCo criticised several key clauses of the agreement on glass-fibre cooperation in Fribourg. The goal of both partners is to provide households and businesses throughout the canton of Fribourg with discrimination-free fibre-optic access. In order to be able to proceed with the extensive investments needed for this project, Groupe E and Swisscom require an agreement within their joint venture that will facilitate expansion of the fibre-optic network with an acceptable level of business risk. According to the report, such an acceptable level of risk no longer exists. Both partners are now jointly holding talks with ComCo in order to resolve the critical situation. Groupe E and Swisscom want to show that effective competition still exists even with the criticised cooperation agreement and that a major infrastructure project can be implemented in the canton of Fribourg. Both partners want to speed up the talks with ComCo as a lot of time has already been lost with expansion of the new fibre-optic network due to action by ComCo. Failure to find a rapid solution could spell the end of the entire project.

Fibre-optic project launched in Fribourg as long ago as 2009

Further to the announcement in 2009, a FTTH pilot project is now under way in the town of Neyruz in the canton of Fribourg and in the Torry district of the city of Fribourg. Around 2,500 households and 100 businesses in Torry and Neyruz have been connected to the open-access fibre-optic network of Groupe E and Swisscom. The network is designed to allow competition and is open and free from discrimination to all service providers. Today, several service providers are already using the fibre-optic network to provide fixed-line telephony, high-speed Internet and digital television. Thanks to fibre, every household and company in the pilot zone is benefiting from this broad range of offerings.



Press Release

Berne, 22 February 2012