



BIPT

**BELGIAN INSTITUTE FOR POSTAL SERVICES AND
TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

PRESS RELEASE

BIPT publishes an "Atlas" of the fixed broadband access coverage

Brussels, 25 April 2016. Today BIPT publishes on its website the maps showing the coverage of the fixed broadband networks in Belgium. These maps indicate the percentage of dwellings that can be connected to the broadband access service in each municipality section according to the different download speeds. According to these maps, 99.9% of the residences in Belgium today have access to a fixed 1 Mbit/s connection. As far as high speed (30 Mbit/s) is concerned, Belgium has an estimated coverage percentage of 93.5% of the habitable dwellings and for very high speed (100 Mbit/s) the estimated coverage rate is of 91.1% of the habitable dwellings.

As announced mid-2015 with the publication of the coverage provided by mobile telecom operators, BIPT publishes online today the coverage maps of the fixed networks. These maps allow the identification of the areas that do not have a good access to broadband yet, as well as the areas with the poorest very high speed coverage. To this end, BIPT aggregated the data of the operators operating a fixed broadband access network on the basis of a conservative evaluation method. The coverage maps indicate the percentage of dwellings that have access to the broadband access service in each municipality section according to the different download speeds (1, 30, 60 and 100 Mbit/s). The 2,664 sections of municipalities correspond more or less to the former municipality boundaries of before the merging of 1977.

As far as very high speed (100 Mbit/s) is concerned, Belgium has an estimated coverage percentage of 91.1% of habitable dwellings. It means that just over 471,000 dwellings are not yet connectable to 100 Mbit/s. These dwellings are mainly located in the provinces of Hainaut, Liège, Namur and Luxembourg.

As far as high speed (30 Mbit/s) is concerned, the estimated coverage percentage of habitable dwellings amounts to 93.5%. Roughly 342,000 dwellings are not yet connectable to 30 Mbit/s. These dwellings are mainly located in the provinces of Hainaut, Liège, Namur and Luxembourg.

Finally, according to the maps, about 99.9% of the dwellings may have access to a fixed 1 Mbit/s connection in Belgium (which corresponds to the bit rate for functional Internet access as defined for universal service). Estimates show that it is not yet the case for 2,263 dwellings; these are located in the provinces of Namur, Liège, Luxembourg and Hainaut. The more concerned municipalities, in other words those where the percentage of dwellings that cannot be connected to 1 Mbit/s is the highest, are the municipalities of Florennes, Sankt Vith, Philippeville, Trois-Ponts and Houffalize.

Among the 102 municipalities with dwellings that do not have access to 1 Mbit/s, 35 have total aggregated 4G coverage (by at least one operator), while 67 have 4G coverage of at least 90.3% of the population. If we also take into account the satellite offers allowing access to 20 Mbit/s bit rates, it can be concluded that 100% of the habitable dwellings in Belgium theoretically have access to a bit rate of minimum 1 Mbit/s.

These maps are an initiative of BIPT; they aim to help consumers and operators to have an overall view of the development of networks. It is also a useful source for partners and public services, such as the FPS Economy and the European Commission, who want to be able to identify non-covered areas (also called "white spots") in the context of the Digital Agenda and the universal service.

Being in the top 5 ranking for the second year in a row, Belgium performs well in the European Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI). The European Commission ranks Belgium second regarding connectivity and according to the figures of end 2015, the broadband coverage of our country is one of the best in Europe. However, these good results regarding connectivity do not in any way reduce the importance to allow every Belgian citizen, including those who live in the rural areas, to benefit from a good broadband access. Furthermore, the European Commission has reminded the efforts still needed in Belgium in order to promote optimal very high speed coverage, through the deployment of new generation networks.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the coverage is an important aspect of the quality of service but it is not the only one. Therefore, as of 1 January 2016 telecom operators are obliged to provide BIPT with further data that regard the quality of service such as installation times, the response time of the customer services or the percentage of failures and malfunctions, which BIPT will also publish on its website as a "quality barometer".

"The digital age of today requires a fast and qualitative network connection", emphasises Vice-premier and Minister of the Digital Agenda and Telecom, Alexander De Croo.

"This exercise is thus important: for the first time the areas without broadband coverage are mapped out, which is a necessary step if we are to guarantee a fast basic coverage for all Belgians. Based on this analysis I will consult with the mayors of the municipalities where problems exist regarding insufficient broadband coverage. Next we will verify with the operators how we can provide for an appropriate solution by means of a mix of technologies."

Jack Hamande, Chairman of the BIPT Council:

"We have one of the best and most extensive fixed Internet networks in Europe. Still there are places where ultrafast Internet through fixed networks is unavailable or Internet access by means of a next-generation network (at least 30 Mbps) is not possible. Thanks to this tool, for the first time, we are able to map out these places for the whole of Belgium, all municipalities and subdivisions included. Following the latest publication regarding the mobile networks in 2015 BIPT hereby presents a comprehensive view of all available networks (fixed and mobile). We hope that citizens, other governments and operators can put the information mapped out to good use."

For more information (for journalists), please contact:

Dirk Appelmans
Spokesman
Tel.: 02 226 87 67

More information: www.bipt.be
BIPT
BIPT - Ellipse Building - Building C - Boulevard du Roi Albert II 35
1030 Brussels

Tel. 02 226 88 88
Fax: 02 226 88 77
info@bipt.be