



Kaboom! Switzerland Halts 5G Rollout Over Health Concerns

It's a gloomy day for Technocrats in Switzerland, which has imposed a nationwide ban on new 5G installation while demanding a thorough study on the health effects of millimeter waves on humans. Until produced, the ban will not be lifted. □ TN Editor

Switzerland, one of the world's leaders in the rollout of 5G mobile technology, has placed an indefinite moratorium on the use of its new network because of health concerns.

The move comes as countries elsewhere around Europe race to upgrade their networks to 5G standards amid a furious rearguard diplomatic campaign by the US to stop them using Chinese technology provided by Huawei. Washington says the company, which is fundamental to most European networks' upgrade plans, presents a grave security risk.

Switzerland is relatively advanced in Europe in adopting 5G. The wealthy alpine country has built more than 2,000 antennas to upgrade its network in the last year alone, and its telecoms providers have been promising their customers' imminent 5G coverage for most of the past

year.

However, a letter sent by the Swiss environment agency, Bafu, to the country's cantonal governments at the end of January, has now in effect called time on the use of all new 5G towers, officials who have seen the letter told the Financial Times.

The agency is responsible for providing the cantons with safety criteria against which telecoms operators' radiation emissions can be judged. Under Switzerland's highly federalised structure, telecoms infrastructure is monitored for compliance and licensed by cantonal authorities, but Bern is responsible for setting the framework.

Bafu has said it cannot yet provide universal criteria without further testing of the impact of 5G radiation.

The agency said it was "not aware of any standard worldwide" that could be used to benchmark recommendations. "Therefore Bafu will examine exposure through adaptive [5G] antennas in depth, if possible in real-world operational conditions. This work will take some time," it said.

Without the criteria, cantons are left with little option but to license 5G infrastructure according to existing guidelines on radiation exposure, which all but preclude the use of 5G except in a tiny minority of cases.

Several cantons have already imposed their own voluntary moratoria because of uncertainty over health risks.

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