



PRESS RELEASE

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DEUTSCHE TELEKOM, ORANGE, TELEFÓNICA AND VODAFONE TO FORM AD TECH JOINT VENTURE

Deutsche Telekom AG, Orange SA, Telefónica SA and Vodafone Group Plc are to form a joint venture for the implementation of a privacy-by-design digital marketing technology platform in Europe that could benefit consumers, advertisers and publishers alike.

The creation of this new entity has been approved today by the European Commission, pursuant to the European Union Merger Regulation.

The four companies will take equal 25% stakes in a newly-formed joint venture holding company, to be based in Belgium and run by independent management under the oversight of a shareholder-appointed supervisory board.

The joint venture is the outcome of a project launched by Vodafone and run by the four operators to develop a technological solution for digital advertising in Europe. The platform has been designed from the outset to be compliant with European data protection policy such as GDPR and the ePrivacy directive. The partners have already initiated a trial in Germany. Other trials are being considered in France and Spain to further develop the platform and it is intended to make it available to any operator within Europe.

The trial platform requires affirmative opt-in consent by the consumer to activate communications from brands via publishers. The only data that is shared is a pseudo-anonymous digital token that cannot be reverse-engineered. Consumers are free to opt in or deny consent with a single click, as well as revoke any other consents given either on the brand's or publisher's website, or via a dedicated, easily accessible privacy portal.

The platform is specifically designed to offer consumers a step change in the control, transparency and protection of their data, which is currently collected, distributed and stored at scale by major, non-European players.

The trial run by Vodafone last year successfully tested the platform on Vodafone's and Deutsche Telekom's networks in Germany, together with online publishers and advertisers. This enabled the four operators to evaluate the platform's ease-of-use in providing consumers with greater control and transparency over how brands communicate with them. Furthermore, the initiative has examined how consumers' personal data is used and their privacy protected in the online advertising ecosystem, while upholding the principles of a free Internet.

The joint venture will outline its vision and strategy in due course, including its plans for adopting the trial technology commercially.

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