

Press Release

Telefónica closes all its copper central offices and heads towards its 100th anniversary

- The company informs the CNMC of the closure of all its copper central offices as part of the fixed network transformation plan.
- Fiber, which is faster, safer and more stable than copper, reduces the environmental impact of the operator's fixed network in Spain by 94%.
- "Telefónica continues to make progress in its transformation to maintain its leadership. The new digital era flows through our networks. The closure of our last copper central offices was another of Telefónica's commitments, and Telefónica always fulfils its commitments and is prepared for the future," says José María Álvarez-Pallete, Chairman of Telefónica.

Madrid, 19 April 2023. Telefónica reaffirms its commitment to the transformation of its fixed infrastructure to convert it completely to fibre to the home (FTTH) with the announcement of the closure of all its copper exchanges, which will take place in 2024 to coincide with the operator's centenary.

Telefónica, leading this transition across European and Latin American companies, is taking the last major step to complete the copper switch-off. With today's announcement to the CNMC of the closure of the last 3,329 copper central offices, 100% of the process will be completed in Spain.

As part of a switch-off that began in 2014 and on Telefónica's 99th birthday, the operator is giving the final push to the technological renewal of its fixed networks to increase the performance and speed of service while reducing energy consumption and its carbon footprint.

On 19 April 2024, exactly one year from now and on the date on which Telefónica will celebrate its first 100 years, a network reconversion will have been achieved that will include the closure of a total of 8,532 exchanges (5,203 closures already communicated to which 3,329 will now be added). Thus, on the company's centenary, the copper switch-off will be effective for all retail customers, who will be able to enjoy a high-performance network.

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"Telefónica continues to make progress in its transformation to maintain its leadership. The new digital era flows through our networks," said Telefónica Chairman José María Álvarez-Pallete. He adds: "Telefónica is a pioneer in the application of artificial intelligence to next-generation networks, and is a key player in the decarbonisation of the economy. The closure of our last copper central offices was another of Telefónica's commitment, and Telefónica always fulfils its commitments and is prepared for the future".

Emilio Gayo, Chairman of Telefónica España, said: "At Telefónica España we are committed to offering the best connectivity to all our customers. With the announcement of the shutdown of all copper exchanges and the decision to stop adding copper, we are moving towards a 100% fibre fixed network".

Key to digitalisation

Telefónica's fixed network is a key enabler for digitalisation. From voice transmission, needs have evolved towards data, which requires more flexible, dynamic and secure networks in order to support constantly growing consumption.

To drive technological development and progress towards ultra-connectivity in the country, Telefónica considers it essential to combine the fibre of fixed networks with the 5G mobile network, which has already been deployed to reach 85% of the population in Spain and covers provincial capitals and towns with more than 250,000 inhabitants.

Fibre brings with it increased speed, improved connection stability and bandwidth, as well as a significant reduction in latency. Furthermore, a single fibre exchange can serve the same number of accesses as four copper exchanges.

In this regulated process, the CNMC is notified of the closure of copper exchanges, which are subsequently closed. At present, 2,236 of the 5,203 central offices announced to the CNMC have already been closed. With the notification of these 3,329 additional exchanges and the closure of all those already notified, the official closure of the copper service will be completed.

Sustainability pathway

The transformation of networks makes particular sense in terms of sustainability. Telefónica's fiber network manages to reduce the environmental impact (energy and other material resources) up to 94% in Spain, which is 18 times less than copper for an equivalent data consumption. This is largely due to the company's previous efforts in terms of energy efficiency, technology design and implementation, and investment in renewables. This commitment by Telefónica runs in parallel to what can be seen in mobile networks, with the move from the 2G/3G standard to 4G/5G, with a 7 times lower impact per equivalent consumption.

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Telefónica's priority is to keep energy consumption stable while data traffic increases. The network that the operator makes available to consumers is continually evolving and is moving decisively towards sustainability: since 2015, in Spain it has managed to reduce CO2 emissions from its operations by 96% (scopes 1 and 2) and energy consumption by 12%, although data traffic has multiplied by 4.7 in the same period.

Sustainability management initiatives include the use of renewable energy in 100% of operations, as well as various efficiency and network modernisation projects, such as replacing copper with fibre. In this way, the company is progressing towards zero net emissions throughout the value chain by 2040.