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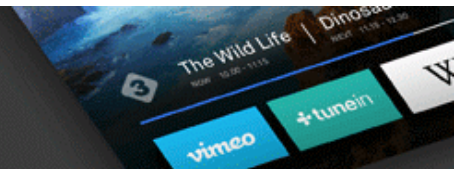
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# FRK demands strong conditions for Unitymedia Vodafone merger

SEPTEMBER 18, 2018 17:38 EUROPE/LONDON BY [JÖRN KRIEGER](#)



German cable operator association FRK calls for tough conditions from the competition and regulatory authorities to be imposed on Vodafone in the antitrust review of the planned acquisition of Unitymedia.

"The **merger** should only be approved if the new telecommunications giant grants its customers in the housing industry a special right of termination for all existing contracts. In addition, the company must be regulated in the broadband market and committed to open access because of its size," FRK chairman Heinz-Peter Labonte said at the FRK Broadband Congress in Leipzig.

Due to the considerably growing market power regarding financing, digitisation and bundled offers as well as a market share of more than 80% in the cable market, FRK expects that it will become increasingly difficult for small and medium-sized network operators to cope with competition.

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"It will become nearly impossible for our members to move into other coverage areas. On the other hand, it will be much easier for the larger Vodafone to attack them in their local markets with all its might. We have therefore submitted applications for hearings at the EU Commission and at the Federal German Cartel Office as part of the preliminary proceedings currently underway in order to present our positions," explained Labonte.

FRK is not only concerned with the cable TV market. In view of almost 30 million addressable households, the significantly larger Vodafone plays a key role in Germany's expansion into a gigabit society and the next mobile communications standard 5G. "In view of this market power, open access should become mandatory for Vodafone and the company should be subject to regulation," stressed Labonte. "For medium-sized and municipal companies increasingly serving their customers via fibre-optic lines, open access has long been a matter of course."



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#### About Jörn Krieger

Jörn reports on the latest developments in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. Since 1992, he has been working as a freelance journalist, specialised in digital media, broadcast technology, convergence and new markets. He also takes up University lectureships, writes articles in specialist publications, and produces radio reports. Jörn is also a moderator of panel discussions at industry events such as ANGA COM, Medientage München and IFA Berlin.

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