

Ericsson set to switch on 5G globally in 2019

Börje Ekholm, president and CEO of Ericsson, says the global operator is set to switch on 5G - globally - in 2019, backed by a strong, secure and available portfolio. At the recent MWC 2019 in Barcelona, Ekholm also stressed the role of 5G as critical national infrastructure and emphasised the advantages for early adopters.



“We are truly switching on 5G around the world in 2019,” he said.

Ekholm said that Ericsson has announced commercial 5G deals with several named service provider customers, as well as 42 Memorandums of Understanding. The company is already rolling out 5G networks across the globe: in the US, Europe, Asia, and Australia, and more announcements are to be made in the future.

The wait for 5G network deployment

“Consumers and enterprises are waiting for 5G,” Ekholm said. “According to Ericsson ConsumerLab research, one-third of smartphone users globally will change either immediately or within six months to a service provider that switches on 5G. Today, the US and Asia are leading in 5G development.”

Ekholm said the first commercial-scale 5G beneficiaries will be mobile broadband consumers with massive and highly cost-efficient capacity expansions facilitating new applications in augmented reality and virtual reality in areas such as gaming and sports broadcasts.

But he also stressed how 5G would move the industry beyond consumer products and into the industrial internet, citing ongoing collaborations in both mobile robotics and all-electric, autonomous vehicles as examples.

Ekholm also highlighted how Ericsson Radio System hardware has been 5G-ready since 2015 and can be used also for 5G New Radio (NR) with a remote software installation.

This means that Ericsson has already shipped more than three million 5G-ready radios to its customers worldwide. Ericsson's unique spectrum sharing capabilities and common core and dynamic orchestration solutions would put Ericsson customers in the lead with 5G, he said.

"Our unique Ericsson Spectrum Sharing is the most economically feasible way to introduce 5G in existing bands achieving immediate nationwide coverage," he said. "We can dynamically mix 4G and 5G traffic on the same spectrum. Some said this kind of spectrum sharing was impossible. Wrong! Our engineers are truly world class. With spectrum sharing, our customers have a real 5G frontrunner advantage."

Ekholm announced that Ericsson intends to acquire Kathrein's antenna and filters business for mobile networks. This will expand the company's capabilities and competencies in the advanced active and passive antenna domain. Ericsson will be adding around 4,000 highly-skilled professionals in R&D, production and sales based in more than 20 locations, including Germany, Romania, the US, Mexico and China.

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