

Bouygues Telecom says withdrawing 3,000 Huawei antennae

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The US has pressured allies to drop Huawei from its 5G infrastructure on security fears which Beijing says are groundless

French operator Bouygues Telecom said Thursday it will withdraw 3,000 mobile phone antennae by 2028 in "very dense population areas" at the

government's behest over purported 5G security issues.

"We shall no longer have any Huawei antennae in very dense areas by 2028," said president Olivier Roussat in a conference call to accompany half-yearly results, saying that meant dismantling 3,000 of some 21,500 across the country.

"The government has chosen pragmatic management" of the issue "which gives operators time to adapt," said Sylvain Chevallier, telecoms specialiste and associate at Bearing Point consultancy.

"But ultimately it is clear—there will no longer be any Huawei" in the French 5G network.

The move comes as the United States piles pressure on allies to cut Huawei, world number two in mobile phones and market leader for 5G equipment, from their latest internet infrastructure.

Washington alleges Chinese firms are used to spy for Beijing, allegations which China denies.

Bouygues Telecom, which does not use Huawei antennae in Paris, will now be unable to use the firm's equipment in Strasbourg, Brest, Toulouse and Rennes, with those cities home to strategic military or cybersecurity installations.

In four other unnamed cities Bouygues will be able to carry on using Huawei antennae for 5G until 2023, and until 2025 for another nine cities. In other major population areas the deadline is now 2028.

In the 57 percent of the country which is not designated as densely populated, Roussat, who said the timeframe for dismantling was "fairly reasonable in terms of financial impact on our operating results," said in

principle Huawei equipment could be used.

His firm is negotiating with Paris for [financial compensation](#) for the cost of dismantling.

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