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BIPT and the Centre for Cybersecurity Belgium warn of a plague of fraudulent telephone calls

Since the end of last week, 100,000 fraudulent telephone calls have been detected in our country. Behind calls from legitimate Belgian telephone numbers, other mostly foreign numbers turn out to be hidden, whereby these callers try to fraudulently obtain personal data from the called parties.

You receive a telephone call that seems to come from a bank, the police or another well-known organisation. Nothing could be further from the truth. "

Victims seem to be called by legitimate Belgian numbers. In most cases, an English-language audio clip is played, requiring the called party to press a button for more information or to amend data. In most cases, this is a computer voice. When you call back afterwards, you end up with an unsuspecting holder of the telephone number. The criminals have "spoofed" his number. Literally translated, 'spoofing' means imitating or faking. The telephone number or the name of the sender of a text message is then the imitated real number or the real name of your bank. Telephone spoofing calls, for example, make it seem as if the call is coming from a legitimate person or company, while in reality it is from a fraudster who often operates from abroad.

The calls seem to come from Belgian numbers. If you pick up, you will receive a message and be put through to a fraudster who will try to take your personal details and/or your bank details. Do not respond under any circumstances", says Michel Van Bellinghen, Chairman of the BIPT Council. "If you have doubts about the authenticity of the call, hang up and call back yourself to a number of this institution that you already knew or that you looked up in reliable sources, rather than to the number that called you", says Miguel De Bruycker, managing director of the CCB.

Fraudulent calls happen on a regular basis. However, the volume of the last few days is unprecedented. The operators cannot block these calls because legitimate companies also use the same underlying technology to call their customers from a call center abroad, for example.

That is why BIPT and the CCB are launching an urgent appeal to telephone users:

1. Always be on your guard when you receive an unexpected call from an unknown number.
2. Never give out personal or bank details via your telephone.
3. If you do give out information, contact your bank immediately and file a complaint with the police.
4. Do not call back to this telephone number.

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