

End of roaming charges: Industry MEPs cap wholesale prices for use of networks

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Caps on the wholesale prices that telecoms operators charge each other for using their networks to carry cross-border “roaming” calls were agreed by industry MEPs on Tuesday. This brings the abolition of roaming charges for consumers a step closer.

Miapetra Kumpula-Natri (S&D), who is steering the legislation through Parliament, said: “The Committee has today given a strong mandate for negotiations with member states. Our position has a single aim - delivering ‘Roam Like At Home’ to all Europeans. Setting price caps closer to real cost of providing roaming access will do just that, but will also pave the way for a true gigabyte society by enabling markets to deliver higher data consumption.”

“Consumers must benefit from competition from small and virtual telecoms operators too after next summer. All citizens must have access to digital services, which today means lower prices and bigger amounts of data”, she added.

Industry Committee MEPs agreed on the following caps:

- €0.03 for voice call, instead of the proposed €0.04,
- a gradually decreasing cap, from €4 to €1 per gigabyte instead of €0.0085 per megabyte, and
- €0.01 for text messages, as proposed by the Commission.

The vote is another step towards the full abolition of retail roaming surcharges, which will enable consumers to use their mobile phones in other EU countries just like at home without paying extra fees. Wholesale roaming prices indirectly affect consumers’ final bills. The agreed caps should instead enable telecoms operators to offer roaming services to their customers without any extra charges on top of the home market price.

The legislative resolution was approved by 53 votes to 5, with 2 abstentions.

Avoiding unfair competition

In their amendments to the draft regulation, MEPs also strengthened the role of the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications ([BEREC](#)), in assessing unfair competition cases and preparing regular reports. In its bi-annual reports, the Commission might include further amendments to the wholesale charges, “if appropriate”, MEPs agreed.

Next steps

MEPs gave the rapporteur, Ms Kumpula-Natri, and Parliament’s negotiating team a mandate to negotiate with Council in order to find an agreement. Any agreement will need to be voted by the both co-legislators before entering into force.

Facts

- Wholesale prices - prices operators charge each other for using their network for roaming purposes.
- “Roam-like-at-home” (RLAH) - the abolition of retail roaming surcharges

Press release

Further information

- End of roaming in 2017: European Commission Q&A: http://www.europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-16-3164_en.pdf
- Meeting documents :
[http://www.emeeeting.europarl.europa.eu/committees/agenda/201611/ITRE/ITRE\(2016\)1128_1/sitt-3498227](http://www.emeeeting.europarl.europa.eu/committees/agenda/201611/ITRE/ITRE(2016)1128_1/sitt-3498227)
- Procedure file:
[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?reference=2016/0185\(COD\)&l=en](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?reference=2016/0185(COD)&l=en)
- Legislative train: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/legislative-train/theme-connected-digital-single-market/file-proposal-for-a-wholesale-roaming-regulation>
- EPRS Briefing:
[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/581424/EPRS_BRI\(2016\)581424_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/581424/EPRS_BRI(2016)581424_EN.pdf)

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