

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3008/08
by Michl Ebner (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Differences in the price of sending SMS messages

In my question E-1544/05 of 26 April 2005, I already drew attention to the problems associated with the substantial national differences in the price of sending SMS messages.

I would like to return to the issue of the double charging of European mobile phone customers.

On the one hand, there are still vast differences between Member States regarding the cost of sending national SMS messages. Private customers in Denmark, for example, pay €0.04 per SMS, whilst customers in the Netherlands pay €0.22 on average for a national SMS. SMS tariffs in Italy are nearer the top end of this scale at €0.15 on average.

In addition, the European customer still faces very high SMS roaming charges when sending or receiving SMS messages abroad. According to data from the Commission, an SMS sent abroad is currently 3 to 25 times more expensive than one sent within national borders.

The effect on consumers of the telecommunications market, and mobile telephony in particular, is greater than ever before and is incompatible with the principles of the internal market.

What specific measures are planned to address this state of affairs? When can consumers hope to see the situation improve and what are the new maximum tariffs for sending an SMS abroad?