Question for written answer P-006710/2011
to the Commission
Rule 117
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Subject: Reduction of mobile termination rates in Bulgaria to satisfy consumers' interests

Bulgaria is an EU Member State with one of the lowest GDP per capita. Nevertheless, the cost of mobile termination rates (MTRs) still exceeds the EU average by more than 1.5 eurocents/min. Therefore, Bulgarian consumers are required to pay higher fees than those in most wealthier Member States, such as Germany or the UK.

Taking into account the demands and proposals raised by the Commission in early 2009, the Bulgarian Communications Regulation Commission (CRC) reduced termination rates to 6.64 eurocents/min (July 2010). This level of MTRs has not been lowered since. In contrast, by January 2011 the EU average had already reached 4.91 eurocents/min and continued to decrease.

While the CRC is pointing to the next market analysis, in which it claims to implement a cost-oriented approach, it is highly improbable that this approach will be effective before the end of 2012. Until now two public procurement procedures regarding a cost-oriented approach have been unsuccessfully announced. It is furthermore expected that the third procedure will not be completed before the notification of the next market analysis in September 2011.

As a result of large-scale MTR cuts in the EU, MTRs in Bulgaria remain way above the EU average while the price discrepancy between both is further increasing. According to the Commission, the level of MTRs should clearly undercut the European average.

1. How does the Commission ensure that the Bulgarian Authorities will resume MTR cuts and effectively decrease them to and further below the EU average?

2. What instruments will the Commission recommend to the CRC in order to achieve an ad-hoc and long-lasting solution for Bulgarian consumers?