

European Commission to propose new law to unite telecom market for immediate release

- New law to be presented on September 11 - first details leaked -

Tomorrow, EU telecom Commissioner Neelie Kroes will propose a new EU law to merge the fragmented European telecom markets into a single market by 2016. According to early leaks of the proposal, the EU is expected to ban roaming charges (additional charges for phone calls and internet use abroad) from 2016 on by mandating the creation of operator alliances. In addition, users will be enabled to choose a different operator when abroad if their home operator charges extra for roaming.

Just in July, the latest stage of the current EU roaming regulation came into force and cut prices for roaming (by more than 30% for using the internet abroad, for example). Further price cuts are already planned for July 2014. But the new law could bring prices down even more and even lead to operators offering pan-European service plans, according to www.fairroaming.org.

In light of the new proposals, the European consumer group "Europeans for Fair Roaming" (www.fairroaming.org) which has lobbied the EU to reduce roaming prices since 2010 is calling on the EU to focus on protecting consumers and small businesses in the newest regulation.

Group co-ordinator Bengt Beier stated: *"Consumers have come to rely on the EU on roaming and the EU will have to deliver. We therefore expect that the EU will finally completely abolish roaming charges - and in fact premiums for all cross-border calls. It will only be a single market when consumers pay the same for all calls, SMS and internet use, wherever they are in Europe and do not have to think about borders at all! We repeat our demands we made since 2010: free receiving of calls, lower prices for ALL cross-border calls in the EU and no more than 10ct per minute or MB."*

But the EU must also protect small companies and operators, says Bengt Beier, campaign co-ordinator of Europeans for Fair Roaming: *"The current EU roaming regulation promises to open the market to new, specialised roaming operators from 2014 on. Many businesses and investors are already preparing for this now. Any new rules the EU proposes must ensure investor security and must not make small operators unprofitable. Small operators are key drivers for lower prices and innovative services in the telecom business."*

Media information: Bengt Beier, campaign coordinator of Europeans for Fair Roaming is available for further comments. Please contact Bengt Beier at roaming@europeunited.eu or +43-650-5154370.

Europeans for Fair Roaming" (www.fairroaming.org) was started by citizens from all over Europe as a Facebook campaign and has since expanded to a network representing tens of thousands of concerned Europeans. The network calls on the EU to end the unfair practice of mobile phone operators charging high roaming fees for using mobile phones in other EU states. Since 2010, Europeans for Fair Roaming works to improve the EU roaming regulation and build a borderless European market for telecommunications.

The current state of the campaign is:

- A network of 20 organisations representing/reaching over 150000 people
- Supported by 14 Members of the European Parliament
- Regular participation in conferences & discussions
- Petitions with several thousand signatures
- Constant communication with key players
- Mentioned in TV news, NY Times, Newsweek, TheParliament.com, EurActiv and other media.

If you have any further questions, you may contact us at +43-650-5154370