

Single Market for Telecoms: EPP Group proposes to abolish retail roaming charges for voice

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The European Parliament's Rapporteur on the draft Regulation laying down measures concerning the European Single Market for electronic communications, EPP Group MEP Pilar del Castillo, today tabled her proposals in which she asks, among others, to abolish retail roaming charges for voice, SMS and data.

With the Rapporteur's proposal, the debate will now start in the European Parliament on a draft Regulation on the Single Market for Telecoms, proposed by the European Commission last September.

Rapporteur's main proposals:

1. Roaming - After three Regulations over a six-year period, Pilar del Castillo proposes to finally abolish retail roaming charges for voice, SMS and data by the 1st of July 2016. The proposal would not hinder the principle of legal certainty since the Roaming III Regulation, which entered into force a year ago, would remain applicable until that date.
2. Open Internet - The Internet must be open. Openness means accessibility for all, individuals and businesses, buyers and sellers, providers and consumers, at competitive prices. The open Internet provisions in the Commission's proposal are in line with current practices regarding reasonable traffic management, and there is nothing in current EU law that prevents agreements amongst end users and internet service providers on specialised services. Nevertheless, the Rapporteur has introduced provisions in order to ensure that principles of transparency and non-discrimination are strengthened.
3. Spectrum policy - Radio spectrum is a critical resource for the internal market for mobile, wireless broadband and satellite communications in the Union, and essential for the EU's future competitiveness, consequently the Rapporteur welcomes the Commission's proposals on spectrum policy. The Rapporteur firmly believes that it is crucial to address the conditions and procedures for granting spectrum licenses for wireless broadband communications as well as the use of unlicensed spectrum, and welcomes the Commission's proposal. More specifically, the Rapporteur has focused on further stimulating the dynamism of spectrum use by introducing provisions on trading and leasing of spectrum harmonised for wireless broadband communications.
4. Single notification to provide electronic communications across the Union - The Rapporteur has introduced a simple standardised notification to BEREC in order to ensure that carriers that already benefit from a general authorisation scheme to provide services in another Member State, don't suffer discrimination in treatment by different Member States and that consistent regulatory practices are applied in the Single Market.
5. BEREC - The Rapporteur's proposals have focused on ensuring the continued effective work of BEREC by harmonising a minimum set of NRA competences, allowing all NRAs to be adequately equipped to fully participate in BEREC, and by extension improving BEREC's ability to effectively fulfil its

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role.

The European Parliament will vote on the Report in Plenary in April before opening negotiations with the Council.