

Minister of Transport, Construction and Regional Development of the Slovak Republic, Árpád Érsek  
Minister for Competitiveness and Digital, Maritime and Services Economy of Malta, Emmanuel Mallia

Also sent to:

Members of the ITRE Committee

Commission Vice-President for the Digital Single Market, Andrus Ansip

Commissioner for the Digital Economy and Society, Günther Oettinger

Dear Minister Árpád Érsek

Dear Minister Emmanuel Mallia

**Joint letter on fair and sustainable roaming from consumer and business representatives in Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania and Sweden**

Roaming rules across EU's borders needs to be both fair and sustainable, in terms of lower wholesale caps and fair use policy, if Europe wants to strengthen and not undermine the world's most affordable mobile broadband access for its consumers and businesses.

Mobility in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is increasingly dependent on access to internet services, such as social media, mail, online check-in and reservations, mobile payment, or simply using an online map to get directions in a foreign city. Having unhindered access to these services at a reasonable cost when travelling in the EU, is therefore a crucial part of a digital single market.

The termination of roaming charges as of 15 June 2017 is an important first step towards this goal.

European consumers in some member states already enjoy a range of roam-like-at-home (RLAH) offers provided by telecom operators, along with very low prices and high volumes, both on voice, data and text on domestic mobile subscriptions compared to other economic regions.

Operators have seen significant increases in roaming traffic, and further increases are expected. The reason is, that as consumers adjust to RLAH pricing, they adapt their roaming behaviour to match their domestic consumption.

For the vast majority of customers this is entirely sustainable and consistent with the aim of RLAH. However, without appropriate fair use policies and low wholesale caps, the result may be that the vast majority of "normal" users, including those that do not roam, could suffer restrictions on their usage or higher prices, when operators address the risk of abusive and excessive use of roaming.

Therefore, the current conditions in innovative and competitive national markets must not be undermined by high wholesale roaming costs, which may hurt consumers, restrict access to internet services across EU borders and reduce investments, which would slow down the digitalization process in Europe.

To avoid this, the abolishment of retail roaming charges for periodic travelling *must* go hand in hand with considerable lower wholesale roaming charges caps, as well as rules on fair use clauses that provide legal clarity, are easy to understand and easy to implement.

It is essential that a fair use policy does not force operators to raise domestic prices and/or withdraw roaming services from cheaper tariffs. Therefore, we must emphasize the importance of the outcome of the work being done currently in BEREC on this point. The objective of fair use policy rules should be to enable telecom operators to prevent and mitigate abusive behaviour, and at the same time guarantee that consumers can roam-like-at-home.

As representatives of European businesses and consumers, we therefore call on the Council and the European Parliament to reduce the level of wholesale caps (in particular for voice and data) to bring them in line with the real costs of providing international roaming. This should be done through a gradual reduction starting at a significantly lower wholesale price than today. The wholesale cap should take into account the interdependence with the rules on fair use policy.

The Council and Parliament should also mandate a review and amendment mechanism between July 2017 and June 2020, so that the gradual reduction in wholesale caps reflects market and technological developments, changes in consumption patterns, reductions in per unit costs and network efficiency over time.

Sincerely,



**Tine Roed**

Deputy Director General  
Confederation of Danish  
Industry



Confederation of Danish Industry



**Vagn Jelsø**

Deputy Executive Director  
Danish Consumer Council



**Toomas Tamsar**

Chairman of the Estonian  
Employers Confederation



**Valli Järve**

Chairman of the Estonian  
Consumers Union



**Jyri Häkämies**

Director General  
Confederation of Finnish  
Industries



**Līga Mengelsone**

Director General  
Employers' Confederation  
of Latvia



**Tekla Zabova**

Chairman of the Council  
Latvian Association for  
Consumer Protection



**Giedrė Švedienė**

Executive Director  
Lithuanian Confederation  
of Industrialists



**Eglė Kybartienė**

President  
Alliance of Lithuanian  
Consumer Organisations



**Jan Bertoft**

Secretary General  
Sveriges Konsumenter

