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**Date: 02/12/2016**  
**Reference: BEUC-PR-2016-020**

## **EU governments put promise to end roaming fees at risk**

Member States decided to maintain the high fees that telecom providers can charge each other when their customers use a foreign network. Today's decision is of particular importance to European consumers as it would have direct negative consequences on the plan to abolish roaming fees in June 2017.

For roaming fees to disappear, *wholesale roaming costs* must be brought down. Otherwise they could be used as a justification by some telecom providers for restricting the mobile phone use of their customers when they are abroad. In addition, because future mobile tariffs will include free roaming, overly high wholesale prices could indirectly trigger national price increases.

EU ministers also discussed measures about how to guarantee a 'fair use' of roaming.<sup>1</sup> Consumers expect roaming fees to disappear and should be able to use mobile services abroad as if they were at home. Any limit introduced through 'fair use' measures must be exceptional and as lenient as possible.

Monique Goyens, the Director General of BEUC, said:

"Member States' handling of this wholesale roaming reform is like playing with fire. In their effort to please their national telecom players they risk scuppering the long-promised end of roaming fees in June 2017.

"Consumers should not have to pay higher phone bills just because they move across a border. Neither should they face the risk of higher domestic prices because their governments decided against bringing down high wholesale charges.

"In these times of political uncertainty, the EU must guarantee the success of its flagship projects. We ask governments to rethink their position and take decisive action to end roaming fees in the EU."

END

<sup>1</sup> In parallel to the wholesale roaming reform, Member States, together with the European Commission, will also decide on the rules that will regulate so-called fair-use policies. The objective is to prevent hypothetical situations where consumers' mobile phone use when abroad could be considered excessive.