

Contact: John Phelan +32 (0)2 789 24 01
Date: 18/03/2014
Reference: BEUC-PR-2014-008

**MEPs vote to rewire Europe's telecoms market -
Progress on Roaming, regress on Net Neutrality**

The European Parliament committee overseeing the overhaul of the EU's telecoms sector voted today. Chipping away at persistent consumer problems such as roaming charges and the lack of regulatory protection of Net Neutrality in Europe are two of the politically thorny subjects involved.

Commenting, Monique Goyens, Director General of The European Consumer Organisation said:

"The notion that mobile devices and their data usage are luxuries is long gone. For both work and leisure they are essential lifelines, yet the European Commission found last month that half of all European consumers still do not use data roaming when abroad due to the heavy hit on their pockets. We have challenged MEPs to dump data roaming costs by 2015 and we are glad to see them give this the green light.

"On the flipside, efforts to win a much-needed European law guaranteeing open and undistorted access to the internet have failed. Net Neutrality is essential for consumers to avoid the fragmentation of the internet and stop operators from becoming economic gatekeepers by prioritising their and commercial partners' content. Internet traffic should be neutral regardless of contract limit allowances. MEPs have let down consumers on this front.

"Specifically, by failing to establish clear safeguards between 'internet access services' and 'specialised services' such as digital TV, the Parliament have allowed telecom companies to take content off the internet and sell it as a specialised service. That inevitably reduces consumer choice and affects the internet's innovative nature."

ENDS