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Finally reality: an end to roaming fees

As of Thursday, 15 June, roaming charges for the use of your mobile phone in another EU country will disappear. These charges have continuously been diminished over the past decade. From now on, consumers when abroad will call, text or surf without additional costs.¹

The end of roaming fees is excellent news for European consumers. The European Consumer Organisation has for a long time been calling for an end to roaming fees. We regularly alerted European institutions about big consumer problems with bills shocks when travellers returned from holidays or business trips. These anachronistic practices impeded the creation of a Single Market for consumers.

In special cases such as when a customer spends more time using his phone abroad than in his home country, providers can still impose small roaming charges. Such exceptions exist so that mobile operators do not raise domestic prices. National telecom regulators need to keep a close watch on how phone companies implement the rules.

Monique Goyens, Director General of The European Consumer Organisation (BEUC), commented:

"Consumers frequently travel across Europe and they need to use their mobile phone to work, stay in touch or watch content online. For too long they were worried that roaming charges can lead to disproportionate costs. Roaming fees are now history and this a very good thing for consumers.

"Mobile operators who claim the new rules would ruin their business and force them to increase domestic prices are insincere. Regulators and national consumer groups will keep a close watch on telecom companies. Consumers should vote with their feet and switch provider if their operator makes a foul move.

"The end of roaming fees is very good news for people who travel within the EU. But prices can still be sky high when someone makes a call from home to another country. These prices are often disproportionate to the real cost for the telecom operator. This is what the EU should tackle next."²

ENDS

¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/roam-home-questions-and-answers>

² http://www.beuc.eu/publications/beuc-x-2017-007_international_calls.pdf

