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EU Telecoms Council: Roaming and Net Neutrality at stake

Wednesday 26.11.2014 the [European Council discussed](#) the final stages of the Telecoms Single Market law which has already passed through Commission and Parliament and will have profound consequences for Europe's consumers and businesses on:

- **Roaming costs** for mobile device use in Europe (banned by December 2015).
- **Net Neutrality** – the principle of an open internet where data is treated equally, blocking of specific apps/services is banned and the emergence of a '2 tiered' internet wherein consumers pay more for higher bandwidth content is prevented.

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

Net Neutrality

Global priority for internet

"Laws on digital issues have recently risen to the top of the EU's policy pile - from the revamp of European data protection standards to the antitrust investigation into Google search results. Few are more proving more urgent than that of Net Neutrality.

"Europe needs Net Neutrality to, in a nutshell, preserve the open internet, make internet operators desist from manipulating traffic for commercial interest and prevent the evolution of a fast and slow lane internet where consumers pay premiums for high bandwidth content. The internet has thrived as long as it is about equal access so the EU must do all it can to ensure control of the levers is not handed to the dominant service and content providers in what is often an uncompetitive market.

National governments set example

"It is not a vague concept and cannot be dealt with by general principles. We need detailed parameters preventing malpractice such as price discrimination and blocking of rival services. Norwegian regulators paved the way this month by preventing ISPs (Internet Service Providers) boosting their own content. The Dutch and Slovenians have even brought in national laws to protect net neutrality. Europe must follow their example."

In the US earlier this month, President Obama urged the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to act to preserve internet neutrality stateside: <http://1.usa.gov/1qDPwBs>

Roaming:

Enough delay

“The incompatibility of roaming charges with the very essence of a single market is clear as day. Yet the big telecoms companies are fighting as hard as possible to delay that particular sunset. This issue has been drawn out for years, despite being anathema to the EU. Enough delay. MEPs have called for roaming to end by end of 2015 and we must achieve this.

End of roaming no threat to operator profits

“Almost three quarters of people are hesitant to use data when abroad. There’s a major untapped market there, so operators should actually not be so fearful of the end of roaming.

'Waterbed' effect on prices / Roam like at home

“At the same time we must be vigilant against any waterbed effect where roaming costs finally fall by the wayside, but national calls, texts or the price of data allowances rise. It’s about time that European consumers can roam like at home.”

Our Factsheet on Net Neutrality: <http://bit.ly/1oLbmHA>

Our Key Messages on Telecoms Single Market law (includes roaming): <http://bit.ly/1vIR7xl>

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