Roaming Regulation

2021/0045(COD) - 15/10/2021 - Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading

The Committee on Industry, Research and Energy adopted a report by Angelika WINZIG (EPP, AT) on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on Roaming on public mobile communications networks within the Union (recast).

As a reminder, this proposal for a recast of Regulation (EU) No 531/2012 on public mobile communications networks within the EU aims to extend the rules applicable to the EU-wide roaming market until 30 June 2032, while adjusting the maximum wholesale charges to ensure sustainability of the provision of retail roaming services at domestic prices, introducing new measures to increase transparency and ensuring a genuine ‘roam-like-at-home’ experience in terms of quality of service and access to emergency services while roaming.

The committee responsible recommended that the European Parliament's position adopted at first reading under the ordinary legislative procedure should amend the proposal as follows:

Transparency obligations

In order to ensure increased transparency and customer protection while travelling, e.g. by **plane and marine vessels**, and to protect from unexpected high bills from inadvertent connection with non-terrestrial networks with automatic handover, the report proposed to extend transparency obligations to these specific situations.

Quality of service

Unless not feasible technically, the roaming services should be provided to customers under the same conditions as if such services were consumed domestically. Therefore, Members stressed that clear and comprehensible information regarding different elements of the quality of service while roaming should be included in customers’ contracts. The contract should also include information on the procedure for the filing of complaints available in cases where the quality of service does not correspond to the terms of the contract.

Customer protection

The roaming customer should receive information about any **additional charges** when using non-terrestrial networks on board aircrafts or marine vessels. Moreover, the report proposed that providers should actively give their customers, provided that the latter are located in the EU, on request and free of charge, additional information on the per-minute, per-text message or per-megabyte data charges (including VAT) for the making or receiving of voice calls and also for the sending and receiving of text messages and data communication services in the visited Member State.

Cut off limits

Customers living in border regions should not receive unnecessarily high bills due to inadvertent roaming, including for the use of non-terrestrial networks on board aircraft or marine vessels. Roaming providers should therefore take necessary measures such as **cut-off limits** as well as **opt-in or opt-out mechanisms** to roam in a network outside the EU, where technically feasible.

Free emergency calls

Members suggested that roaming providers should inform roaming customers of the possibility to access emergency services free of charge by calling the **single European emergency number '112'** and by alternative means of access through emergency communications technically feasible to be used by roaming customers, particularly by those with disabilities.

Roaming in third countries

EU citizens still face very high roaming fees when using mobile connections in third countries. In particular, citizens and businesses in external border regions would benefit greatly from roaming provisions with neighbouring countries similar to those in the EU. The Commission is therefore encouraged to include 'roam-like-at-home' provisions in future international agreements with third countries, in particular with regard to third countries directly bordering the Union. Bilateral agreements between operators in the Union and in third countries should be encouraged with the aim of minimising costs on the wholesale and at the retail level.

BEREC

BEREC should assess, on an ongoing basis, the regulatory framework for consumers, businesses and operators to ensure access to next generation connectivity such as 5G as well as future networks and technologies. It should establish and maintain a **single Union-wide database** containing the means of access to emergency communications that are mandated in each Member State. The database is intended to provide transparency to enable national regulatory authorities and operators to have direct access to information about how to access emergency communication in all Member States. The database should be made accessible for national regulatory authorities and operators by 31 December 2022.

The Commission should submit **biennial reports** to the European Parliament and to the Council which should be accompanied by a legislative proposal addressing any change of circumstances within the roaming market. The first such report shall be submitted by 30 June 2025.