

Electronic communications: regulatory framework for networks and services, reductions on mobile roaming charges across the Community

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The Council held a policy debate, on the basis of a Presidency questionnaire, on a proposal for a regulation on roaming on public mobile networks within the Community and amending Directive 2002/21/EC on a common regulatory framework for electronic communications networks and services.

The Presidency drew conclusions of the discussion as follows: it is broadly agreed that legal intervention is necessary in order to bring the roaming costs to a moderate level, and the Commission proposal is a step to the right direction. Transparency in prices can for its part help in solving the problem. It would increase customer satisfaction, and thus be also beneficial for the operators. However, transparency alone cannot solve the problem of high roaming costs, regulation of tariffs is also needed. This regulation must be such that all consumers can benefit of speedy and substantial decreases in the prices. It must be assured, however, that competitiveness of the market will not be endangered. The regulation of the tariffs must be clear and simple, and the operators must be left the possibility of flexible pricing.

More detailed discussions are still needed. It is hoped that a solution - together with the European Parliament - is found speedily and the Council will support the future German Presidency in its efforts to do this.

The work on the proposal in Council's preparatory bodies will continue under the forthcoming German Presidency. The negotiations with the European Parliament in view of a first reading agreement will also start at the beginning of 2007.