

Mobile Phone Charges Across Europe

Voice-over 1:

Roaming charges are very different from one E.U. state to another. A Cypriot visiting Belgium, for instance, might pay twelve euros to make a four minute call home, while a Finn in Belgium would only pay fifty-one cents to call home. The operators argue that competition is already at work in the market and that E.U. rules would create geographic imbalances, this roaming professional tells us.

Voice-over 2:

More or less, the regulation would favour those countries which generate traffic more than the countries which receive the traffic. The central and northern European states generate more traffic generally, than those in the south, such as Portugal - they are typically receivers. We'd have a very considerable plunge in roaming revenue. This is very important for national operations, and they would not be compensated by an eventual reduction in costs of our traffic abroad, which would be proportionally lower. This regulation is very negative, penalising for operators such as those in Portugal.

Voice-over 1:

This scenario does worry regulatory bodies; Anacom is one of them. Its president is concerned that some consumers will lose out as operators do everything they can to make up for revenue losses.

Voice-over 3:

The operators will see their roaming income drop, and so can look at raising their intake from other sorts of national services. If it's like that, at national level, travellers gain, but those who stay home will pay more.

Voice-over 1:

National price rises should not happen, according to the European Consumer Bureau, because the claim by operators that price reductions mean they will earn far less is unproven.

Jim Murray:

Private consumers in particular will use their telephones, their mobiles abroad more and will bring them abroad more if prices come down; if they can be sure they're not going to be hit with a huge bill. So the actual loss is not nearly as high as companies, er, pretend it is.

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