



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

Transport, Telecommunications and Energy



27.03.09

EU Telecoms Commissioner calls for consumer right to change phone operator in 1 day

On the 23rd of March, Viviane Reding, the EU's Telecoms Commissioner called on the European Parliament and the Council of EU Telecoms ministers to be ambitious in the coming days as they enter the final negotiations on a new set of EU rules strengthening competition and consumer rights in a single market for telecoms like mobile phones services and internet connections. While consumers in all 27 Member States currently have the right to change their (fixed and mobile) phone operator while keeping their number, at the moment not everyone can expect it to happen in one day, and some face a wait of two to three weeks, reducing the impact of this important right on competition and consumer choice. On average across the EU, it takes 8.5 days for a mobile number and 7.5 days for a fixed number to be ported.



Redding stressed the benefits of allowing consumers to switch mobile or fixed operator while keeping their phone number. "The right to switch operator put pressure on the telecoms companies to offer the most competitive deals so that they can either find new customers or keep their existing ones", Redding stated.

What next?

- On Tuesday, 24 March, there will be a final round of negotiations between representatives of the European Parliament, of the Council and of the Commission to reach a deal on the Commission's proposal for a new EU Regulation to reduce consumer charges for SMS and data roaming and on the Commission's proposal for a reform of the way how telecoms markets are regulated in Europe



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- On Wednesday, 25 March, Commissioner Reding will present the Commission's latest report on the state of competition and consumer benefits on Europe's single telecoms market at a press conference in Brussels at 11:30.

View Commissioner Reding's video message here:

http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/reding/video/index_en.htm

COM (2009) 139 - Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Regulation (EC) No 1321/2004 on the establishment of structures for the management of the European satellite radio-navigation programmes.

The aim of this proposal is to bring the provisions of Council Regulation (EC) No 1321/2004 on the establishment of structures for the management of the European satellite radio-navigation programmes into line with those of Regulation (EC) No 683/2008. In recital 17 of Regulation (EC) No 683/2008, the European Parliament and the Council also invited the Commission to 'put forward a proposal in order to align formally the management structures of the programmes as set out in Regulation (EC) No 1321/2004 with the new roles of the Commission and the Authority'.

To view the full communication document please click here:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2009:0139:FIN:EN:PDF>

Electronic Communications Market

COM (2009) 140 - Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - Progress Report on the Single European Electronic Communications Market 2008 (14th report)

The electronic communications sector in the EU is continuing to bring significant benefits to users and consumers. EU countries are world leaders in broadband take-up, mobile Internet is growing rapidly, prices for most services are continuing to fall and consumers are increasingly availing themselves of bundled services.



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However, the increasingly challenging environment makes it necessary to adopt a regulatory approach that will enhance predictability and certainty and create a level playing field in the EU's single market. As part of the drive to ensure effective and consistent regulation, the Commission is finalising a Recommendation on the regulatory treatment of fixed and mobile termination rates and preparing a Recommendation on regulated access.

The report presents a snapshot of the European telecoms market and competition achieved in the 27 member states last year. Despite the economic crisis, the EU's telecoms sector (worth about 3% of EU GDP) continued to grow in 2008 with revenues estimated at above €300 billion, up 1.3% compared to 2007 and outperforming the rest of the economy (up by 1% only). The sector is continuing to weather the storm of inflation because the price for the majority of basic communications is constantly falling.

The full communication can be viewed here:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2009:0140:FIN:EN:PDF>

Nuclear non-Proliferation.

COM (2009) 143 - Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament - Communication on Nuclear non-Proliferation

In a Communication entitled "Addressing the international challenge of nuclear safety and security" [COM (2008) 312], the Commission announced that it would address to the Council and the Parliament a specific Communication on the various EU instruments available in the field of nuclear non-proliferation, in particular under the Euratom Treaty.

The purpose of this Communication is to set out the global context highlighting the need for strengthened international guarantees of non-proliferation, to present the main available EU instruments in this field, in particular those under the Euratom Treaty, and the possible ways these instruments could be used to develop – in close coordination with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) stronger international guarantees of non-proliferation

The full communication document can be found here:

http://ec.europa.eu/energy/nuclear/euratom/doc/2009_143_com.pdf%0c



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MEPs call for measures to support job creation in the car industry and encourage the development of green technologies

The European automotive industry is key to the EU economy, employing 12 million workers directly and indirectly, that is 6% of the employed population in the European Union. MEPs are calling for measures to support job creation in the industry, and to encourage the development of green technologies. The effects of the economic crisis on the European car industry and its supply chain are the subject of a cross-party resolution adopted by the EP during this week's Strasbourg plenary. The industry has been particularly badly hit by the economic crisis, and has seen a significant drop in demand during the last quarter of 2008 and the first of 2009. This has led to a consequent decrease in production which puts "inevitable pressure on employment and investment levels in the EU." The UK is facing significant problems in this industry, with the Society of Motor Manufacturers reporting that the number of new car registrations fell by 30.9% in January.

The automotive industry's multiplier effect for other sectors and industries is vital for the European economy, particularly for small and medium sized enterprises. The Commission is therefore urging to ensure that the best use of funds available is used in support of jobs and to provide training. The European Investment Fund was mentioned as possible body that could give financial aid to the industry.

The Commission is also pushing for an end to protectionism in the automotive industry. If the auto industry is to recover, then the global car market needs to refrain from adopting protectionist or discriminatory policies. MEPs are also concerned that some member states are adopting short-term policies at national level which could result in the distortion of fair competition within the single market. They are calling on Member States to ensure that any future measures are "coherent, efficient and coordinated."

The use of green technologies should also be extended to fleet renewal and scrapping schemes. Here, the EP calls on the Commission to draw up guidelines and recommendations to reinvigorate the automotive leasing market and to monitor the internal market to ensure that there are no distortions.