

REGULATORS INTENSIFY WORK ON MOBILE INTERNATIONAL ROAMING

The regulators from 32 European countries decided in their ERG meeting in Bled, Slovenia to intensify their efforts to find a harmonised approach to the regulation of mobile international roaming services. ERG had previously established a joint project to consider analysis of Wholesale International Roaming, a market recommended by the Commission for consideration for regulation. The wholesale market comprises services offered by mobile network operators to one another to allow retail customers to make and receive mobile calls when abroad.

In the light of their joint work, ERG noted that:

- Retail charges are currently very high without clear justification
- This appears to result both from high wholesale charges levied by the foreign host network operator and also, in many cases, from high retail mark-ups charged by the customer's own network operator
- Reductions in wholesale charges are often not passed through to the retail customer
- Consumers often lack clear information on the charges for roaming
- There are strong linkages between the markets in the different member states

ERG adopted a common position on wholesale market definition and market analysis at the meeting. This common position will be published for consultation.

Drawing on that common approach, NRAs will now proceed with analysis of their national markets, notifying the Commission of their planned decisions in due course.

ERG also established a Project Team to identify measures to be put in place in order to improve tariff transparency.

Regulators will discuss progress at their next meeting in September and will consider at that time whether further development of their common approach is necessary.