

GILES CHICHESTER MEP

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PRESS RELEASE

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Mobile phone roaming 'bill shock' brought to an end thanks to Conservative MEPs

MEP Giles Chichester, Conservative industry spokesman in the European Parliament, said today that the days of mobile phone 'bill shock' are almost over following a vote in the European Parliament to bring down roaming charges for text messages and data.

Conservative MEPs have led the discussions to introduce more transparency into the pricing of data downloads when abroad, which too often lead to consumers unwittingly running up bills of several thousand pounds by downloading videos and pictures.

Conservative MEP Syed Kamall wrote the consumer protection elements of the regulation. He amended the European Commission's text so that consumers will set a limit on the total bill they can run up when downloading abroad. Once near that limit, the mobile operator will end the data connection unless it is overridden by the user.

MEP Chichester said:

"All mobile users will now have clearer information about the costs of roaming whilst those users who simply send text messages when abroad will no longer pay over the odds.

"We have sought to place price transparency above price capping, which will enable users who download data abroad to bring the prices down organically in a market that is yet to fully develop."

MEP Kamall said:

"Consumers have a right to know the bill they are running up. Too often we see stories of people downloading videos on their phones whilst on holiday, only to find it has cost thousands of pounds.

"These plans will put an end to 'bill shock' by ensuring users are aware of the charges and prompting them when a limit is reached. In a relatively new market like mobile data downloads it is important that we do not regulate heavily. These proposals will empower consumers without interfering with the development of this new market."

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Conservatives in the European Parliament