



ROAMING. THE LAST EUROPEAN BORDER.

“Continue, continue, continue, there is no future for the people of Europe other than the Union”

Jean Monet Founding Father European Union

A long long time ago Europe was full of borders. There was even a time when a wall crossed Europe splitting Europe in two isolated parts. Then came the EU, the time of collaboration, the time of building together. Brick by brick the wall was demolished. Freedom of movement, freedom of commerce, and even a common currency. But still, in 2011, when Europeans travel from one place to another, there is one thing which makes them realize there are still different countries and invisible walls that separate them - roaming.

In June 2011, the European Commission organized a very interesting workshop about the Digital Agenda. INTUG was invited to participate so that the voice of the communications users could be heard. It was clear then that there is still a dysfunctional international mobile market, that the cost of roaming is far above the cost, and that international businesses are paying a kind of tax to mobile network operators. As a result, business in Europe is less competitive in global markets than it could be.

Each one of us has a personal experience on that topic. I travelled from Spain to Sweden this summer (the opposite of what most people do) and was charged €0.80 per minute for roaming. Data was even worse. To use my Blackberry I had to pay €8 PER DAY, equivalent to €240 per month! Someone was trying to get rich by taking money from my pocket....

The European Commission has defined roaming as one of the priority topics for the Digital Agenda. The message is clear. This situation cannot go on. There will be zero tolerance for roaming charges.

Following some success in SMS roaming, it is now time to stop the few making tons of money stolen from the many. End user price regulation must be tightened further as soon as possible, with clear measures on the direction we must take. We cannot accept that a businessman traveling around Europe has to block data roaming because of its cost. We cannot accept that students traveling abroad on holiday must block data roaming of their social networks because the cost is so excessive. It is time to act now.

Leonard Pera. INTUG Board Member