

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-003007/24
to the Commission
Davor Ivo Stier (PPE)
(18 December 2024)**

Subject: Strengthening the roaming initiative for the Western Balkan countries

The agreement between 38 telecommunication operators from the EU and the Western Balkans to lower data roaming prices, effective as of 1 October 2023, is a commendable step towards enhancing regional connectivity. Supported by the Commission and the Regional Cooperation Council, this voluntary initiative is making roaming more affordable for citizens and businesses. There are plans for further price reductions in the future.

However, the voluntary nature of the agreement might limit its reach, as participation is the choice of individual operators. This may result in uneven benefits for consumers and businesses across the EU and the Western Balkans.

1. What are the conclusions and results of the first regular review that was planned for October 2024, as stated in the EU-Western Balkans Roaming Declaration?
2. Does the Commission plan to introduce a proposal to make the roaming initiative in the Western Balkan countries mandatory in the future? A proposal for a mandatory roaming initiative would guarantee universal participation, accelerate progress towards the alignment of roaming and domestic prices, and provide greater benefits to both citizens and businesses.

Submitted: 18.12.2024

**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Virkkunen on behalf of the European Commission
(18 February 2025)**

The voluntary Roaming Declaration between the EU and the Western Balkan telecommunication operators has contributed to the lowering of retail data roaming prices.

The Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) is in the lead for monitoring the implementation of the voluntary Declaration. The RCC initiated the review in 2024 and is currently finalising the first implementation report.

The Western Balkans are already on a good path for lowering roaming charges between the region and the EU. In the Western Balkans 'Roam-like-at-home' is implemented in the region between the Western Balkan partners and a voluntary roaming agreement is in place between a number of EU and Western Balkan operators.

As a follow-up to the Western Balkan growth plan, the Commission is exploring a legally viable option for bringing the Western Balkans into the EU 'Roam-like-at-home' area subject to meeting necessary legal conditions.
