

# Majorca Daily Bulletin

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**Taxi drivers in strike threat over airport bus service: See Inside**



# EU clears final hurdle for ending mobile roaming charges

**E**UROPEAN lawmakers clinched a deal early yesterday to cap the wholesale charges mobile service operators pay each other to enable their customers to use their mobile phones in other European countries, paving the way for the abolition of roaming fees in June. The caps on wholesale roaming charges were the last piece of the puzzle needed for the abolition of retail roaming charges on 15 June, 2017, to ensure companies can afford to continue offering roaming within the EU once they can no longer charge retail customers for the service.

Under yesterday's agreement between

lawmakers and the Council of EU member states, wholesale charges for data - which were the most controversial given the exponential use of mobile Internet - will be capped at 7.7 euros per gigabyte from June 2017, going down to 2.5 euros per gigabyte in 2022.

Caps for making calls will decrease from 5 euro cents per minute to 3.2 euro cents per minute, while those for sending text messages will halve to 1 euro cent from 2 euro cents as of June, said the Council.

"Goodbye roaming," tweeted Miapetra Kumpula-Natri, the EU lawmaker who negotiated for the setting of wholesale rates on behalf of the European parlia-

ment. The European Commission - the EU executive - will review the wholesale caps every two years and propose new ones if necessary.

Yesterday's deal still needs to be confirmed by the full European Parliament and all member states.

The decade-long battle against roaming charges took on an added significance after Britain voted to quit the bloc last year in a surge of anti-EU sentiment, making Brussels keen to demonstrate the benefits of membership to ordinary citizens.

"Today we deliver on our promise," said Andrus Ansip, European Commission vice president.



**House of Commons votes in favour of bill triggering UK's exit of the European Union**



**M**PS MPs last night voted in favour of the Government's Brexit Bill in the House of Commons.

The European Union (Notification of Withdrawal) Bill, which paves the way for the formal Brexit process to begin under Article 50, passed its first hurdle after being backed by the House.

MPs voted in favour of the bill by 498 to 114 - a majority of 384.

It will now be scrutinised in its committee stage from Monday to Wednesday next week.

The House voted against an SNP-wrecking amendment that would have stopped Theresa May triggering formal Brexit talks, by 336 votes to 100 - a majority of 236.