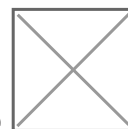


5 November 2012: Referral for opinion regarding pooling and roaming conditions on mobile telephone networks

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The French Government has sought the opinion of the Autorité de la concurrence regarding pooling and roaming conditions on mobile telephone networks

> Version française



Arnaud Montebourg, France's Minister for Industry, and Fleur Pellerin, Deputy Industry Minister in charge of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, of Innovation and of Digital Economy, have just sought the opinion of the Autorité de la concurrence regarding pooling and roaming conditions on mobile telephone networks.

After consulting ARCEP (The French regulator of the electronic communications and postal sectors), the Autorité de la concurrence will give its opinion on whether or not the following issues are in keeping with the effective operation of competition:

- **Continuation of the roaming agreement between Free and Orange**

The 2G roaming agreement concluded in March 2011 between Free and Orange has been extended to the 3G network within a strictly commercial framework. This agreement enables Free to direct traffic to its customers via the Orange network in even the most populated areas in France. Under such circumstances, and should the agreement be maintained or made more permanent, the Government is wondering to what extent Free would then enjoy a rollout model that is lastingly more advantageous than the rollout models of its competitors.

- **Pooling or use of roaming in the 800 MHz band for the least populated areas in France**

Certain operators wish, as of now, to pool their networks in order to accelerate rollouts in the 800 MHz band in the least populated areas in France, especially in village centres that are part of the "blind spot coverage" programme. In view of the difficulties they are encountering, they want clearer information about the various available options that are in compliance with competition rules.

- **Pooling of networks between the operators in the most populated areas in France**

The Government is asking the Autorité de la concurrence whether, outside of these priority rollout areas, it would be possible to consider pooling for the most populated areas in France, without adversely affecting competition, employment, and investment.

The Autorité de la concurrence will issue its opinion at the end of February following consultation with all the relevant stakeholders.

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