

**International Working Group
for Research of Competition Issues
in the Market of International Telecommunications (Roaming)**

Information about workgroup as at October 2015

The International Working Group for Research of Competition Issues in the Market of International Telecommunications (Roaming) (hereinafter referred as the “Working Group”) has been created on the basis of the Headquarters for Joint Investigations of Violations of the Antimonopoly Law of the CIS Member-States (hereinafter referred as the “Headquarters”), in accordance with the agreement reached between the Federal Antimonopoly Service (the FAS Russia) and the Turkish Competition Authority during the 36th session of the Interstate Council on Antimonopoly Policy (ICAP) (June 2012, Baku, Azerbaijan). The Working Group is chaired by Anatoly Golomolzin, the Deputy Head of the FAS Russia and Ali Demiröz, the Senior coordinator of the Turkish Competition Authority.

The Working group was appointed for the purpose of meeting the Recommendations for Developing Markets of International Telecommunications in the CIS Member-States contained in the Report on the State of Competition in the CIS Mobile Communication Markets prepared by ICAP in 2010.

The first session of the Working Group was held within the framework of the International Event “The Russian Competition Day” on September 12, 2012, in the city of Kazan, Russia (please see the Minutes of the first session).

As a result of the meeting, the Working Group approved in general the Declaration on joint efforts towards developing competition (hereafter – the Declaration). The FAS Russia and the Turkish Competition Authority had been entrusted with the task of finalizing the Declaration. In order to achieve the most effective results of the Working Group the participants of the session identified the following forms of interaction within the Working Group: the exchange of non-confidential information, consultations, meetings with business representatives, public authorities, including regulators in the field of telecommunications, etc. The functions of coordinators in specific areas of the Working Group’s activity were assigned to the competition authorities-members of the Working Group. The representatives of such countries as Hungary, Mongolia, Portugal, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Moldavia, Serbia, USA, Turkey, Ukraine, Finland, the Czech Republic, Sweden and of the Eurasian Economic Commission participated in the meeting.

The next second session of the Working Group was held on 1 April 2014 in Istanbul, Turkey. The meeting was attended by the representatives of Russia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Turkey and Ukraine. Within the frameworks of the session, participants revealed problems on the cross-border market of Turkey and the CIS Member-Countries (for example, unreasonably high rates for roaming services which infringe consumer interests), discussed possible regulatory mechanisms in telecommunications. The abovementioned problems and recommendations for solutions are available in the Minutes of the second session. After exchanging information, the participants discussed possible solutions on reducing the roaming services rates. It was decided by participants to carry out a detailed analysis of the situation, jointly with the telecommunications regulators, and to provide each other with the findings of the analysis until the 3rd session of the Working Group in order to draw proposals before the next meeting.

During the third session, held on September 10, 2014 in Saint-Petersburg, Russia within the framework of the Annual International Event “Russian Competition Day”, the Working Group incorporated the basic principles of the interaction between regulators, telecommunications operators, stipulating the conditions for the tariff reductions. In addition, the participants of the session determined the “Road Map” for implementation of measures aimed at enhancing competition and lowering of tariffs in roaming. See the Minutes of the third session to read more about it. The meeting was attended by the representatives of Turkey, India, Egypt, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, China, Macedonia, Serbia, the Czech Republic and of such international organizations as the Eurasian Economic Commission, Commonwealth of Independent States, UNCTAD participated in the meeting.

The fourth session was held from March, 31th to April, 2nd 2015 in Kazan. Participants agreed to carry out activities of the 1st phase of the Road Map for implementation of roaming principles and to extend all possible cooperation and support in implementation of the Fair Roaming Principles, including issues regarding:

- approximation (reduction) of interconnection rates for termination of international calls;
- taxation of inter-operator roaming services;
- harmonization of national legislation on communications.

The participants also decided to take mutual steps to reduce interconnection rates for termination of international calls and to harmonize national legislation on communications. The meeting was attended by the representatives of Austria, Belarus, Bulgaria, Kazakhstan, Turkey, the Czech Republic, Japan, South Africa, Kirghizia and of such international organizations as the Eurasian Economic Commission and OECD.

The fifth session of the Working Group was held on September 21, 2015, in Moscow, in the framework of the International event «The Russian Competition Week». Negotiations achieved active progress, but as of September 2015 have not ended. That is why it was agreed to prolong the 1st phase of the Road Map for implementation of the Fair Roaming Principles till 1 March 2016.

Besides that, in the framework of the session the participants discussed the reports of the Belgian competition authority, the EC DG Comp, the Turkish competition authority and the Slovenian Competition Protection Agency on recent developments in the telecommunications sector. The Members of the Working Group focused also on the issue of transition of the telecommunications services market from the state of natural monopoly to the state of competitive market by virtue of technological competition development on retail markets.