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Dame Chi Onwurah MP
Chair, Science, Innovation and
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House of Commons
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Dear Dame Chi,

THE TRADE (MOBILE ROAMING) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2026

I am writing to share with you and your committee details of the Trade (Mobile Roaming) (Amendment) Regulations 2026 which are being laid in draft before Parliament today under the affirmative procedure.

In 2021, the UK and EEA/EFTA (Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein) signed a Free Trade Agreement, (the Agreement), which contained provisions on international mobile roaming. These provisions set a cap on 'wholesale roaming rates' to facilitate surcharge-free roaming between the UK, Iceland and Norway (Liechtenstein opted out). Wholesale roaming rates are what mobile operators charge each other (as opposed to retail rates, which is what they charge their customers). The Trade (Mobile Roaming) Regulations 2023 implemented those wholesale caps in domestic law.

The Agreement contains a review clause, under which the wholesale rate should be reviewed by all affected Parties every two years "with a view to determining whether those rates are still appropriate". The EEA/EFTA-UK Joint Committee is the vehicle to decide whether rates remain appropriate, and it has concluded that they have diverged from current market conditions.

The Joint Committee therefore decided to amend the rates in the Agreement, so that they remain appropriate. The rates agreed by the Joint Committee align with those currently in force in the EU, as set out in the EU regulations aimed at regulating roaming charges in the EU. This approach is consistent with the Agreement's provision that asserts that the Parties should consider relevant international benchmarks, and be reflective of current market conditions, when determining whether the wholesale rates are still appropriate.

This instrument therefore amends the rates set in the Trade (Mobile Roaming) Regulations 2023 in conformance with the EEA/EFTA-UK Joint Committee's decision.

Yours sincerely,

Baroness Lloyd of Effra
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Digital Economy