



News Release

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Communications Consumer Panel highlights the risks of early approval of T Mobile/Orange merger

Commenting on the European Commission's decision to approve the T-Mobile/Orange merger without a detailed phase 2 investigation, the Communications Consumer Panel said that the conditions attached to the merger are designed to address some of the consumer concerns raised by the panel, but without seeing the Commission's detailed analysis it is not possible to say whether the merger will be good for UK consumers.

"UK consumers have up to now benefited from the choice, innovation and low prices that result from a competitive mobile market and we want to see this continue," commented Panel Chair Anna Bradley.

"There may be advantages to clearing the merger at this early stage, but it also carries risks for consumers. If the decision-making process had involved a more detailed and open investigation this would have allowed greater scrutiny of the merger's impact and given consumers more confidence in the outcome."

"It is now incumbent on T-Mobile and Orange to proceed with the merger with minimum disruption and confusion for their customers."

Ends

NOTES FOR EDITORS AND CSEs

The Communications Consumer Panel and Consumer Focus joint letter to the European Commission, which outlined concerns about the proposed merger, was sent in December 2009. The full text of the letter can be found here: <http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/smartweb/telecommunications/mobile-markets>

The Communications Consumer Panel was established to advise Ofcom and other bodies on the consumer interest in the markets it regulates. The Panel is independent and sets its own agenda. Visit www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk for more information. The Panel's members appointed by Ofcom are:

- Anna Bradley (Chair)
- Fiona Ballantyne (member for Scotland)

- Louisa Bolch
- Kim Brook (member for Wales)
- Colin Browne
- Roger Darlington (member for England)
- Maureen Edmondson (member for Northern Ireland)
- Leen Petre
- Damian Tambini
- Bob Warner

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