

LONDON--([BUSINESS WIRE](#))--Following today's decision by the European Union's antitrust authorities to clear the merger of Telefónica with E-Plus in Germany, Anne Bouverot, Director General, GSMA comments:

"Consolidation will benefit EU consumers and businesses and it is important that EU competition policies do not distort markets or disincentivise investment. Constraining regulation means that the EU's communications markets continue to lag behind those of the USA and Asia, with consumers and businesses in Europe experiencing slower connection speeds and many still denied access to the latest 4G broadband technologies. The GSMA believes that a major impact of consolidation is an increase in long-term investment.

"Market fragmentation prevents Europe's network investors from capturing the economies of scale and scope that, for example, America's two largest carriers have access to – each of which is larger than the three biggest European carriers, combined. Commissioner Almunia emphasised the need to continue to drive towards a single European telecommunications market, making specific reference to pan-European spectrum management and a unified regulatory regime. The GSMA supports these goals, the delivery of which would underpin the fundamental reforms needed in Europe's competition/merger review processes.

"In a rapidly changing market, characterised by strong growth in data consumption and new sources of Internet-based competition, we believe consolidation in the European telecoms market is essential to boost investment and deliver innovative, new consumer services.

"While the decision to allow the merger in Germany to go ahead is welcomed, efforts should be redoubled to reduce constraints on market driven restructuring. A streamlined merger review process and reduced remedies are essential. This change can only be achieved by a comprehensive review of Europe's antitrust framework."

-ENDS-

About the GSMA

The GSMA represents the interests of mobile operators worldwide. Spanning more than 220 countries, the GSMA unites nearly 800 of the world's mobile operators with 250 companies in the broader mobile ecosystem, including handset and device makers, software companies, equipment providers and Internet companies, as well as organisations in industry sectors such as financial services, healthcare, media, transport and utilities. The GSMA also produces industry-leading events such as Mobile World Congress and Mobile Asia Expo.

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