



Information Notice

EU mobile roaming retail prices from 30 April 2016

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Reference: ComReg 16/33
Version: Final
Date: 03/05/2016

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Mobile roaming is the ability to use your mobile phone while travelling in the European Union (EU) and outside of it.

Throughout the EU¹, the cost of using your mobile phone to make or receive calls, send SMS messages, or to go online is capped. This means there is a limit on what your mobile operator can charge you.

The European Commission (EC) first began to regulate roaming in 2007. It used an EC Regulation to make the roaming rules uniform throughout the EU. Regulating roaming has resulted in lower prices and a higher standard of transparency and protection for subscribers.

The EC has reviewed and amended the EC Regulation on a number of occasions, most recently on 29 November 2015². When the amendments are fully implemented, there will be further significant price reductions for roaming customers.

Roam Like at Home

A key aim of the revised EC Regulation is to ensure that, from 15 June 2017, roaming customers will be charged the same price for using their mobile phone when travelling in the EU as they are charged in their home country.

This means that customers will be charged their “Domestic Price” when roaming in the EU. If a mobile customer has purchased bundled services (price plans that have specific call, text, and data allowances) that they use at home, then their mobile operator should, from 30 April 2016, deduct any roaming usage from that home bundle. If all of the bundle is used up, then the “Domestic Price” will be the normal price that they pay for out of bundle usage. This will be subject to a fair use policy³.

¹ 28 Member States - Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, UK - and 3 EEA countries – Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway (please note that the revised Roaming Regulation will come into effect for these three countries after the 30 April date, so please contact your mobile operator to confirm charges). These tariffs are not available in Switzerland or Turkey so beware that you could be charged more for using your mobile in these countries.

² Regulation (EU) 2015/2120 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2015 laying down measures concerning open internet access and amending Directive 2002/22/EC on universal service and users’ rights relating to electronic communications networks and services and Regulation (EU) No 531/2012 on roaming on public mobile communications networks within the Union.

³ The fair usage policy will be finalised by the European Commission by 15 December 2016.

Surcharges Allowed Until June 2017

A transitional period will be in force from 30 April 2016 to 15 June 2017. During this period, mobile operators may charge their customers an extra fee for roaming (a surcharge) on top of their Domestic Price. However, these surcharges are capped by the EC Regulation.

If a mobile operator applies a surcharge, which is permitted until 15 June 2017, then the total of the Domestic Price and the surcharge cannot exceed the limits set by the EC Regulation.

If the mobile customer exceeds the allowances of their bundle, their operator can charge the domestic out-of-bundle price plus a surcharge for any roaming usage. However, once a surcharge is applied, these charges must not exceed the caps in the table below. (These prices exclude VAT at the applicable rate in Ireland of 23%).

Table: Caps on Domestic Prices and Surcharges for Roaming

	1 July 2014 to 29 April 2016 maximum retail price (ex VAT)	30 April 2016 maximum retail price (ex VAT)	15 June 2017
Outgoing voice calls (per minute)	€0.19	Surcharge of up to €0.05 can be charged in addition to the Domestic Price.	No surcharge applied, Domestic Price charged**
Incoming voice calls (per minute)	€0.05	Reduced to €0.0114	No surcharge applied, Domestic Price charged**
Outgoing texts (per SMS message)	€0.06	Surcharge of up to €0.02 can be charged in addition to the Domestic Price.	No surcharge applied, Domestic Price charged**
Online (data download, per MB*)	€0.20	Surcharge of up to €0.05 can be charged in addition to the Domestic Price.	No surcharge applied, Domestic Price charged**

* The tariff is per Megabyte to download data or browse the Internet. This will be charged when roaming per Kilobyte used.

** This will be subject to a fair use policy which will be finalised by the European Commission by 15 December 2016.

Note: Consumers are strongly advised to ask their operator to explain their particular tariff plan and to explain exactly what they will pay for roaming in the EU in all cases.

These price caps are the maximum permissible prices for EU roaming. However, mobile operators are free to offer cheaper rates, so it could be beneficial to shop around for better value - particularly for those who travel or use mobile services frequently within the EU.

The EC Roaming Regulation only applies to travel within the EU. The cost of roaming (particularly data roaming) can be significantly higher outside the EU. Therefore, consumers should be careful to check prices with their provider before travelling.