



Commission for
Communications Regulation

Information Notice

Implementation of EU Roaming Regulation by Irish Mobile Companies

First wave of Irish and EU aggregated roaming data

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1 Background

The Roaming Regulation was proposed in 2006 by the European Commission following concerns expressed by National Regulatory Authorities (NRAs) through the European Regulators Group (ERG) that the 2002 Regulatory Framework prevented regulators from adequately addressing the issue of high roaming charges. The Roaming Regulation came into effect on 30 June 2007¹.

This data information note will be published by ComReg on a 6 monthly basis and will give an overview of aggregated Irish and EU roaming data on pricing which includes voice calls made and received, rest of world voice calls and pricing for SMS (text message). The collection of data for monitoring purposes is a requirement of the Roaming Regulation. ERG coordinates the actions of individual NRAs and the data collection exercise has made use of a commonly agreed data model and timing for collection periods. While the ERG report covers a broad set of roaming data this initial report concentrates on pricing analysis at a retail level; subsequent reports will include wholesale pricing analysis and data roaming.

The Regulation lays down rules on charges that may be levied by mobile operators for the provision of roaming services for voice calls originating and terminating within the European Union at both wholesale and retail level.

Wholesale Price Cap

The wholesale price ceiling was effective from 30 August 2007 and the maximum permitted charge will decrease in each subsequent year.

Wholesale Roaming Rate

Effective Date	30 Aug. 2007	30 Aug. 2008	30 Aug. 2009
Wholesale Roaming Rate per minute	30 cent	28 cent	26 cent

¹ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2007:171:0032:0040:EN:PDF>

Retail Price Cap

The Roaming Regulation requires mobile service providers to offer all customers a tariff sometimes called the (“Eurotariff”) with a price ceiling. As with wholesale rates, the price ceiling will reduce at 12 monthly intervals.

Retail Roaming Rate

VAT excl.	30 Aug. 2007		30 Aug. 2008		30 Aug. 2009	
	VAT Excl.	VAT @21% Incl.	VAT Excl.	VAT @21% Incl.	VAT Excl.	VAT @21% Incl.
Eurotariff limit for calls made within EU per minute	49 cent	59 cent	46 cent	56 cent	43 cent	52 cent
Eurotariff limit for calls received within EU per minute	24 cent	29 cent	22 cent	27 cent	19 cent	23 cent

All Irish mobile service providers introduced retail rates in order to comply with the Roaming Regulation on or before the required date. Current roaming rates are shown below: (Some operators have additional roaming packages which may include higher charges for EU destinations but contain other elements attractive to customers based on individual usage).

“Eurotariff” roaming rates (VAT Incl.) of Irish mobile operators

Irish Operator	Making a call	Receiving a call
3	€0.39	€0.19
Meteor	€0.59	€0.29
02	€0.59	€0.29
Vodafone	€0.59	€0.29

Pricing Transparency

The Roaming Regulation also introduced pricing transparency measures for consumers. It requires mobile operators to give free personalised information on retail roaming charges when roaming in the EU. This includes an SMS text to be automatically sent to an individual’s mobile phone with basic price information when roaming. Service providers are also required to provide a freephone number where detailed price information may be obtained.

2 Legal Basis and Methodology

Article 7 of the Roaming Regulation (EC) No 717/2007 requires NRAs to monitor developments in charges and to report to the European Commission every six months. While this obligation is addressed to individual NRAs, the ERG has acted as a central point for collating aggregated national data.

The first report was published on the ERG website on 19 January 2007². The report provides an overview of implementation in all Member States. This and subsequent reports will describe the evolution of the roaming market in the EU and provide a basis for the EU Commission's review of the Regulation at end 2008.

Article 7(2) of the Regulation requires NRAs to make up-to-date information on the application of the Regulation publicly available. This information note is published for this purpose.

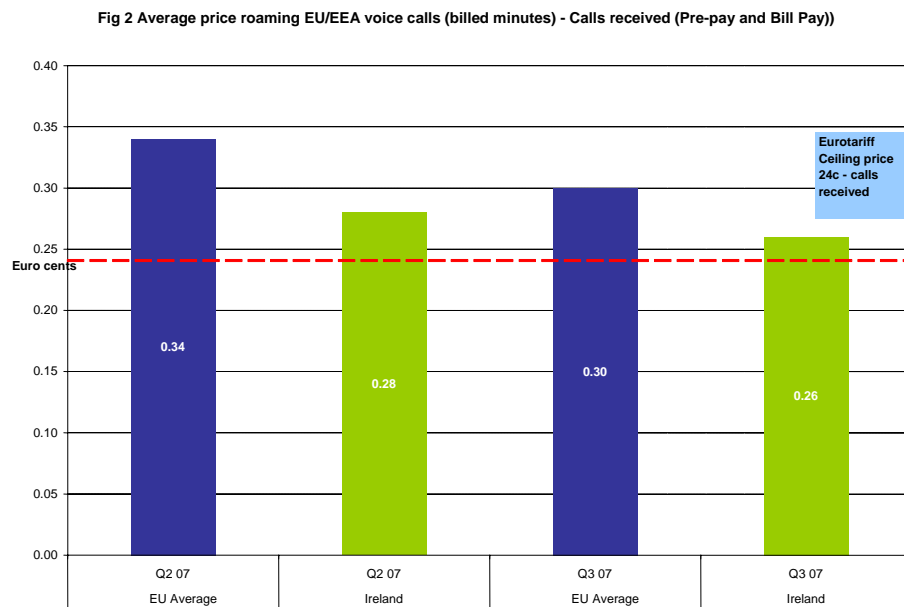
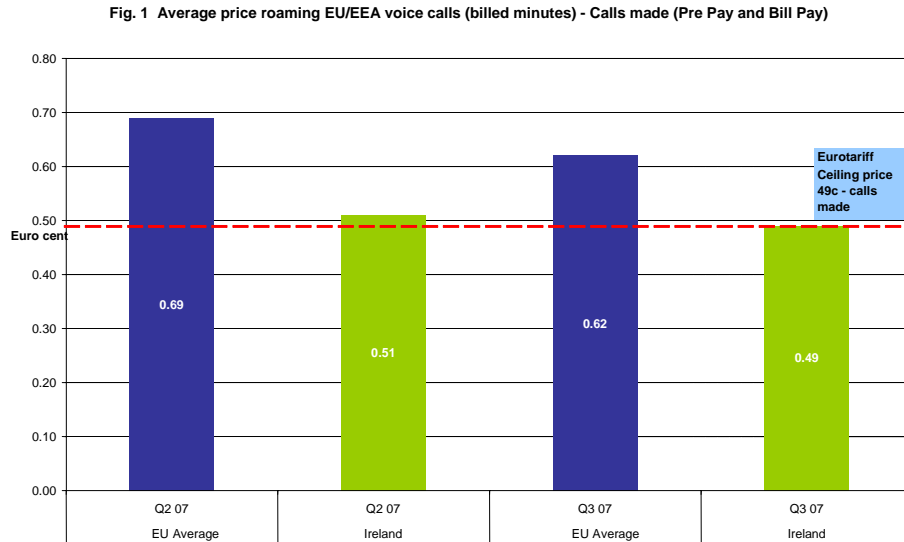
As a Regulation of the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, the requirements are directly applicable. In addition, the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources made regulations in December 2007 designating ComReg as the national regulatory authority for the purpose of the Regulations³.

² http://erg.ec.europa.eu/doc/publications/erg_07_85_intl_roaming_rep.pdf

³ <http://www.dcmnr.gov.ie/NR/rdonlyres/3921AE72-2DA0-4A26-96D9-971035ED491E/0/MobileTelephoneRoamingRegulationsSI792of2007doc.pdf>

3 Irish Data Analysis – April – September 2007

Note: Prices shown in the following charts are VAT Exclusive



Note: While Q3 data for Ireland shows average prices in excess of the permitted maximum, the data includes 2 months before the regulation had effect.

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Fig 3 Rest of World price of a roaming voice call (billed minutes) - Calls made and received (Pre Pay and Bill Pay)

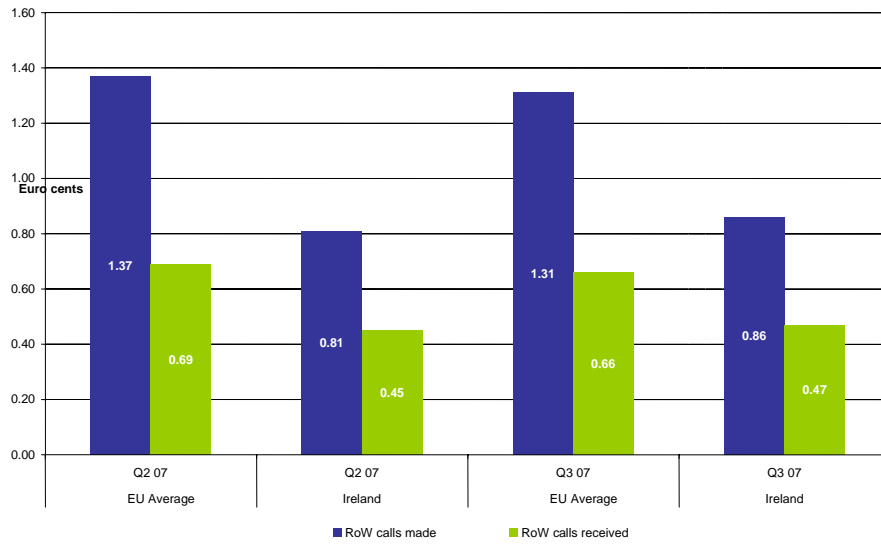
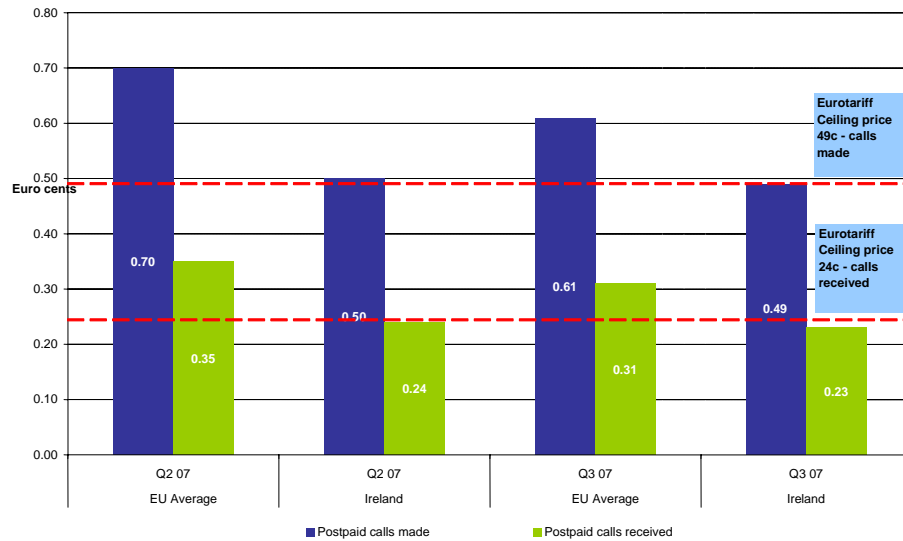
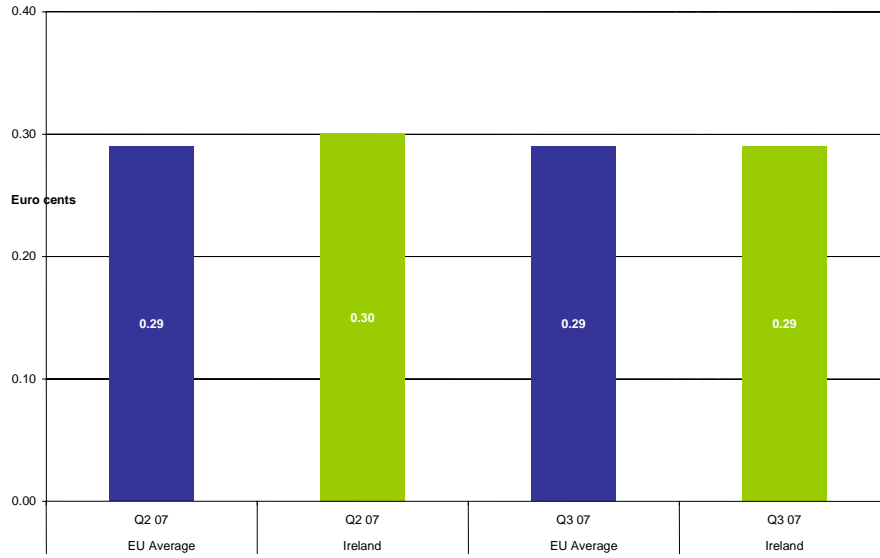


Fig 4 Bill Pay Only - EU/EEA roaming voice calls (billed minutes) - Calls made and received



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Fig 5 SMS - price per roaming message EU/EEA



4 Commentary

A comprehensive range of data was requested by all NRAs from national mobile operators of international roaming services. The collection of the data was on a best efforts basis as the Regulation did not take full effect until September 2007. The data presented in this report and the full EU ERG comprehensive data report covers the period 1 April to 30 September 2007 split by calendar quarter.

Figures 1-4 shows that roaming charges applied by Irish mobile operators for voice calls are below the average charged by mobile operators in other EU states. However, figure 5 indicates that SMS charges are at the EU average of 29 cent (35 cent incl. VAT). This compares to National SMS charges which range from 5 cent to 13 cent (VAT incl.).

In the case of Irish mobile operators only one could provide data on its volume of both actual minutes and billed minutes. This is material because retail roaming calls are generally billed on a charging basis of one minute and not on a per second basis. Some mobile operators in other Member States were also unable to provide a full set of data. As a consequence it is not possible to accurately calculate the premium which customers pay because of per minute billing. However the ERG calculation shows that on average across the EU consumers paid approximately 20% higher as a result. ComReg expects that subsequent data reports will not suffer from this data shortfall and a more accurate assessment can be made in future reports.

ComReg will continue to monitor roaming charges and will publish the next information note in July 2008.