

## Digital Single Market

# Roaming

Going abroad? EU rules keep down the cost of using your mobile phone and smart device when roaming.



For a decade, the Commission has been working to reduce the surcharges that telecoms operators imposed on their customers each time they crossed a border while using their mobile device on holiday or during business trips. Since 2007, roaming prices have decreased by more than 90%. In 2015, the European Parliament and the Council agreed to end roaming surcharges for people who travel periodically in the EU. "Roam like at Home" - where customers pay domestic prices, irrespective of where they are traveling in the EU - will become a reality for all European travellers on 15 June 2017.

For more information, please consult the [Frequently Asked Questions section](#) [1].

# Evolution of roaming tariffs

[The results on roaming tariffs](#) [2] speak for themselves:

- Since 2007 the EU has achieved retail price reductions across calls of 92%
- Since 2009 the EU has achieved retail price reduction across SMS of 92%
- Data roaming is now up to 96% cheaper compared to 2012 when the first EU retail price cap became applicable for data roaming
- Between 2008 and 2015, the volume of data roaming has been multiplied by more than 100

## What has the European Union done so far?

### January 2017: the co-legislators agreed on new wholesale roaming rules

The European Parliament and the Council found a political agreement on the new rules to be applied by operators on the wholesale roaming market, based on the proposal made by the Commission in June 2016 (see below). This is the price that operators have to pay each other for using their respective networks abroad in the EU. The new rules on wholesale roaming will be formally adopted by the European Parliament and Council in the weeks to come. This is the last step to be completed before "Roam like at Home" can start on 15 June 2017.

### December 2016: the Commission formally adopted a roaming fair use policy

On 15 December 2016 the European Commission adopted [rules on the application of fair use policy on roaming at domestic price](#) [3], as mandated by the co-legislator in 2015. The adoption was a result of intensive consultations with the European Parliament, Member States, stakeholders, consumer representatives, operators and the Body of European Regulators in Electronic Communications ([BEREC](#) [4]).

Those [rules](#) [5] were voted by Member State's representatives on 12 December 2016 before they were formally adopted by the College of Commissioners on 15 December 2016. Read the [impact assessment and the additional analysis](#) [5].

The implementing rules on fair use policy make sure that all European travellers will enjoy the "Roam like at Home" opportunity by paying the same price for mobile calls, SMS or data when they travel away from their "home". The measure further clarifies consumer rights and introduces safeguards to ensure that the most competitive domestic offers remain attractive.

The fair use policy rules are based on the principle of residence or stable links European consumers may have with any EU Member State: you can roam like at home when you travel in the EU away from your effective home (place of actual living) in the Member State of the roaming provider.

The safeguards for operators cover abuses of roaming at domestic price like permanently staying in an EU country other than the country of the roaming provider. The safeguards also cover possible abuses in roaming of domestic tariff plans with unlimited (or very cheap) data. In both cases, operators will have to alert their users, and they will be able to apply small surcharges (which will be a maximum of €0.032/min per call, €0.01/SMS and €0.0077/MB, with the data maximum declining further in 2018 and subsequent years).

Read more details in the [press release](#) [6] and [factsheets](#) [7] (15/12/2016), and access the [Commission implementing regulation](#) [5] (15/12/2016).

## **June 2016: the Commission proposed a maximum regulated wholesale roaming charges**

For the abolition of retail roaming charges to be sustainable throughout the EU, national wholesale roaming markets need to be competitive and to enable operators to offer retail roaming services without any charges in addition to the domestic price. Wholesale prices are those which operators charge each other for using their network. That is why the Roaming Regulation entrusted the Commission with the task of reviewing the wholesale roaming markets and making appropriate proposals before 15 June 2016, in order to enable the abolition of retail roaming charges from 15 June 2017. As a result of the various analyses, the Commission proposed on 15 June 2016 to set maximum regulated wholesale roaming charges at € 0.04/min, € 0.01/SMS and € 0.0085/MB. Those maximum charges have been further capped by the co-legislator when achieving political agreement on the Commission proposal in January 2017 (see above). This is important to prepare the end of roaming charges for consumers travelling in the EU set for 15 June 2017.

## **October 2015: the European Parliament and the Council voted the end of roaming charges when travelling in the EU**

According to the [new rules on roaming charges and open Internet](#) [8] adopted by the European Parliament and the Council in October 2015, consumers will pay the same price as at home for calls, texts and mobile data wherever they are travelling in the EU.

Already from April 2016, roaming became cheaper: operators may only charge a small additional amount to domestic prices up to € 0.05 per minute of call made, and up to € 0.0114 per minute of call received, € 0.02 per SMS sent, and € 0.05 per MB of data (excl. VAT). On 1 January 2017, the price cap on the roaming surcharge for received calls decreased down to €0.0108 per minute (excl. VAT)

## **September 2013: legislative proposal adopted by the Commission**

High premiums for roaming calls are an excessive irritant to business and leisure customers; they are a market distortion with no rational place in a single market – they teach users to fear their phones instead of using them. To tackle this issue, on 11 September 2013, the European Commission adopted a [legislative package](#) [9] for a "Connected Continent: Building a Telecoms Single Market" aimed at building a connected, competitive continent and enabling sustainable digital jobs and industries.

## **2007: "Eurotariff"**

The European Union's first rules to address overcharging in roaming prices came in 2007 - the "Eurotariff" capped maximum prices for phone calls made and received while abroad. These maximum prices apply to all consumers, unless they opt for special packages offered by operators. These rules have since been periodically reviewed and reformed, with further reductions in price caps and automatic protections against data roaming bill shocks.

## **Team responsible**

[DG Connect](#) [10]

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#### **Links**

[1] <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/frequently-asked-questions-roam-home>

[2] <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/node/90>

[3] <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32016R2286>

[4] <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/berec-body-european-regulators-electronic-communications>

[5] <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/roaming-implementing-regulation>

[6] <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/end-roaming-charges-eu-2017-commission-agrees-new-approach-make-it-work-all-europeans>

[7] <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/end-roaming-charges-travellers-european-union-how-will-commission-make-it-work>

[8] <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/new-rules-roaming-charges-and-open-internet>

[9] <http://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/node/67489/#roaming>

[10] [https://ec.europa.eu/info/departments/communications-networks-content-and-technology\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/departments/communications-networks-content-and-technology_en)