



## End of roaming charges: Commission determined to make it work

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Following intensive exchanges with the European Parliament, Member States, stakeholders, consumer representatives, regulators and operators, yesterday the College of Commissioners discussed draft rules which reinforce the [approach](#) adopted by the College in September to end roaming charges in the EU in 2017. The latest draft further clarifies consumer rights and introduces safeguards to ensure the most competitive domestic offers remain attractive.

Vice-President in charge of the Digital Single Market Andrus **Ansip** said:

*"We are providing a balanced solution which is in the interest of everyone who uses mobile phones and devices. Every European will be able to roam without extra charges, when travelling from the place they call "home". Every European should also be able to benefit from the most competitive domestic offers. In close cooperation with European consumers, we have designed safeguards to ensure travellers benefit from "roam like at home", while avoiding negative effects on the most competitive domestic data packages. We have listened, we have consulted, we have refined our proposals; I believe we provide legal certainty. It is now up to EU Member States to support what we are proposing in order to make Europeans' lives easier, cut bills and keep prices down."*

Commissioner Günther H. **Oettinger**, in charge of the Digital Economy and Society, said: "Our proposal provides protection for consumers and also ensures sustainability for telecoms operators."

The EU's commitment of 2015 to end roaming charges for periodic travel in the European Union requires the Commission to adopt rules by 15 December 2016 on "fair use" to achieve "Roam like at Home". In September, the College decided that consumers should be able to use their mobile devices without any time limit while travelling away from "home", subject to proportionate checks for abuses.

### Protecting consumers while ensuring a "fair use" policy

As set out in the [Telecoms Single Market Regulation](#), the Commission is committed to make the end of roaming charges a reality. All European travellers will enjoy the "Roam like at Home" opportunity created by the European Regulation, i.e. they will pay the same price for mobile calls, SMS or data whether they travel away from their "home" (their country of residence or with which they have stable links). The draft rules enshrine this basic principle. In the light of feedback received on an earlier draft, the latest Commission draft rules:

- Provide further detail on the concept of a "stable link" with a country, to ensure that people such as frontier workers, posted workers, students and retired people who have stable links with a country without officially residing in that country can benefit from offers in the country where they work, study or spend substantial time.
- Ensure that consumers are not subject to over-intrusive checking or burdensome requests for documentation. This is done by foreseeing a minimum "observation period" before operators can identify a risk of abusive roaming use – on the basis of presence and consumption at home and abroad. Based on the advice of consumer organisations, this period should not be less than four months.
- Establish an additional minimum alert period of 14 days before surcharges can be imposed on consumers.
- Safeguard the access of all consumers, travellers and non-travellers, to the best, most competitive domestic deals. This is done by allowing an exceptional brake on intensive roaming data consumption, linked to the wholesale price level. Such intensive use could otherwise make low-price packages economically unattractive, and provoke price hikes, domestic volume restrictions or restrictions on roaming.

### Next steps

After yesterday's College discussion, the draft legislation (an implementing act) has been sent to the Representatives of Member States, who will meet on Monday 12 December to vote on the text.

Afterwards, the Commission will be able to adopt the rules. In addition, the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers in charge of Telecoms will have to finalise their negotiations on regulation of the wholesale roaming market (the prices operators charge each other to allow roaming across Europe on each other's' networks). The Commission will continue to act as an honest broker to help reach an agreement as soon as possible.

## **Background**

For a decade, the Commission has been working to reduce and ultimately end 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%, a further decrease in prices was reached in April. In 2015, and based on a proposal of the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council agreed to end roaming charges 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 by June 2017.

## **For More Information**

See our [Factsheet](#)

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### Attachments

[Factsheet roaming V6.pdf](#)