



BELGIAN INSTITUTE FOR POSTAL SERVICES AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

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PRESS RELEASE

New roaming tariffs as from 30 April 2016

Brussels, 29 April 2016 - Starting from tomorrow, 30 April 2016, telecom operators will only be allowed to add a capped surcharge to the domestic tariff. As a consequence calling, texting and surfing the Internet abroad will possibly be a lot cheaper, but it pays for customers to stay alert.

A maximum surcharge on top of the domestic tariffs

International roaming charges are capped by the European regulation. Each year since 2010 the maximum price for roaming in the EU has strongly decreased. The latest price reduction was on 1 July 2014. From 30 April 2016 onwards there is a temporary change in the way the maximum price is calculated. It will be equal to the national rates plus a maximum of

- 6.05 eurocent per call minute for outgoing mobile calls;
- 1.38 eurocent per call minute for incoming mobile calls;
- 2.42 eurocent per SMS;
- 6.05 eurocent per megabyte of data.

Applying a lower rate than these price caps is possible, and many operators actually do. Operators are also free to charge higher rates, for instance as part of a roaming bundle (which may include other advantages for example), but it must always be possible for the customer to switch to the maximum tariffs. The operator can also opt not to levy a roaming surcharge any more. In that case he charges the usual domestic rates.

Where do those tariffs apply?

The roaming tariffs apply if you call from another European country, e.g. France, to Belgium or from that country to yet another European country, e.g. Germany. Calling from Belgium to another country (in or outside Europe) does not constitute a roaming call, but an international call, to which other (often more expensive) tariffs apply. The same goes when you call from or to a non-EU country.¹

Stay alert and block if necessary

In principle the adapted roaming tariffs is good news for consumers, but it still pays to be alert, because the new calculation method does not always make the situation more transparent for consumers. The obligatory text messages sent when crossing the border will only give information about the surcharge that is added to the domestic tariff. Therefore it will not immediately be clear to consumers what they will have to pay exactly.

¹ Find out here which countries are included exactly:

<http://www.bipt.be/en/consumers/faq/148-which-countries-apply-the-eurotariff>

Neither will it be clear to consumers, in case the operator does not apply a legal surcharge, whether the tariffs are actually always cheaper or more expensive than the maximum roaming tariffs.

However, every operator provides a blocking mechanism so that customers can keep the data roaming charges under control: the operator has to interrupt the Internet services automatically if the bill for international roaming of data services has reached the limit of € 50 (VAT excluded) or another limit set by the customer. When the customer has reached 80% of the upper limit, he will be alerted by the operator by SMS, e-mail or a pop-up. If the customer does not respond the service will be interrupted when the upper limit is reached.

From 15 June 2017 telecom operators will in principle no longer be allowed to charge extra roaming fees and making mobile calls, texting and mobile surfing will be possible at the national rate. There will be a fair use limit, however, in order to avoid abuse. The fair use limit will be laid down by the European Commission.

Discover all our FAQs about [international roaming](#) on the BIPT website.

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