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BELGIAN INSTITUTE FOR POSTAL SERVICES AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

PRESS RELEASE

BIPT gives tips and tricks for mobile Internet and calling abroad

Brussels, 29 June 2015 - Last week BIPT and the FPS Economy launched the www.surfmobiel.be website aimed at informing the consumer on the advantages of mobile Internet and on the proper, safe and controlled use thereof. Mobile surfing, calling, texting, or roaming is also possible from abroad and is very easy today. Roaming does not necessarily have to go hand in hand with a surprisingly high telecom invoice, but nevertheless it remains useful to keep a check on the prices and consumption. For indeed the Eurotariff does not apply outside of the EU Member States (and thus neither in certain popular holiday destinations). Therefore BIPT gives a number of tips and tricks to the travelling telecom user.

Where do I find the roaming rates?

First of all your provider has to send you a **text message automatically** when you enter another European Member State. That message includes the price you will have to pay for mobile Internet, mobile calling and texting. It also gives you a free phone number you can call or text. Through this number your provider has to give you all information on roaming rates in the country where you are. This way you can ask for the roaming rates for mobile data, for in and outgoing calls, text messages, MMS, ...

How can I manage my roaming use?

Each mobile operator provides for a **blocking mechanism** ensuring that you can keep check on your data roaming costs abroad (not only in Europe): your operator has to cut the Internet services automatically when the invoice for international roaming of data services has reached the limit of € 50 (€ 60.50 incl. VAT). However your provider may not surprise you in this: once you have reached 80% of the limit, your provider has to send you a text message, e-mail or pop-up informing you thereof. You can always contact your provider to ask him to lower or increase the € 60.50 (incl. VAT) limit for data roaming services. He has to do this for free and at the latest by the following working day.

Try and keep an eye on the quantity of mobile data you consume regardless of the above. There are applications such as 3G Watchdog and Netcounter that you can download for free and that keep track of your MB consumption. That way you can always check how much MB you have consumed and you can see how much that will cost you. Usually telecom operators also have a similar tool.

It is possible that certain programmes are active on your laptop or smartphone that connect to the Internet without you knowing it, for instance to get updates. For example Windows or iTunes updates or additions to your virus scanner. As soon as your laptop or smartphone 'picks up' an Internet connection, such a programme ensures that you automatically use the most recent version of the software. Remember that you have to pay for this abroad! We therefore advise you to **deactivate the automatic updates** before travelling abroad.

Do I enjoy the advantageous Eurotariff?

Most of the European countries apply the Eurotariff (you will find the exact list of countries [here](#)), **the maximum rate mobile operators are allowed to charge for international roaming** for in and outgoing calls, text messages and mobile Internet in these countries. If you are a customer with a Belgian mobile operator and you use the Internet, you call or you text from another European country, you will enjoy the Eurotariff provided that the other European country applies the Eurotariff. The Eurotariff amounts to maximum € 0.242/MB for mobile Internet, € 0.230/min. for making calls, € 0.060/min. for receiving calls, € 0.073 for sending text messages and receiving text messages is free of charge. The Eurotariff, consequently, is higher than a number of national tariffs, but lower than the normal international rates. If you are using a fixed telephone, the Eurotariff does not apply. You will pay the normal international rate in that case.

The mobile data packages included in your mobile subscription do not necessarily include data for mobile Internet abroad. You had better check this with your operator. In that case you will pay the above-mentioned Eurotariff for your use abroad.

Some operators today also offer **special roaming packages**, valid for several days or one week. You will pay a fixed amount for these packages and consequently the Eurotariff will not apply. If you choose another rate or a package of services including another tariff for roaming calls, you can ask for a transfer to the Eurotariff at any given time. Your provider has to arrange this within the working day. This transfer is free of charge.

Attention! The Eurotariff does not apply:

- in certain popular travel destinations such as Switzerland, Turkey, Morocco, ...
- in countries that are not a member of the EU (apart from some exceptions);
- when you are calling or texting from Belgium to another country.

You do not want roaming abroad at all?

In that case you can ask your operator to **switch off the data roaming option**. You can also set your phone in such a way that it does not use mobile Internet as soon as it is connected to a network abroad. You will not pay data roaming charges in that case but you will not be able to use your smartphone for Internet, e-mail or MMS etc. when abroad. However, you can still use a secured Wi-Fi network to check your mails or connect to the Internet for a while.

More tips and tricks?

Go to the www.surfmobiell.be website recently launched by BIPT and the FPS Economy to inform consumers about the advantages of mobile Internet and about the correct, safe and controlled use of it. The website includes an online tool allowing you to estimate the data volume you need. This way you, as a consumer, can determine which telecom subscription suits you best.

For more information (for journalists), please contact:

Dirk Appelmans
Spokesman
Tel.: 02 226 87 67

More info:
www.surfmobiell.be
www.bipt.be
BIPT
Ellipse Building – Building C – Boulevard du Roi Albert II, 35
1030 Brussels