

End of roaming: the fight to abolish surcharges abroad

From 15 June 2017 Europeans can use their phone in any EU country and pay what they would pay at home. All extra roaming charges cease to exist.

From 15 June 2017, wherever you are travelling to in the EU, you can call, send a text message and browse the internet at the same conditions you enjoy in your home country. Watch our video interview with Viviane Reding, who a decade ago launched the fight against roaming charges when she was the European commissioner for Information society and media. Today Reding, who is a Luxembourg member of the EPP group, is an MEP.

Reding stressed the importance of abolishing surcharges: "Ending roaming charges restores people's freedom to travel, to feel at home, to no longer have to pay for crossing borders, but to see the whole of Europe as home." Watch the full interview in the video above.

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"Ending roaming charges restores people's freedom to travel, to feel at home"

Viviane Reding

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Charges based on fair use

The European Parliament welcomed the idea and fought hard to ensure that the time spent by a user abroad is not limited to a specific duration, but is based on the generous [principle of fair use](#). This means that as long as you spend more time using your phone at home than you do in another EU country, you will be able to "roam like at home".

To fight abuse of the regulation, for example by buying a phone contract in a country where prices are cheaper and use it primarily in another country, a telecom operator could ask for additional roaming charges where the use abroad exceeds the use at home.

Roaming charges will also be eliminated in Iceland, Norway and Lichtenstein, which are part of the European Economic Area.

The collapse of roaming charges

EU institutions tackled roaming charges for the first time in 2007 when they set maximum prices. At the time the price of international roaming far exceeded the cost sustained by mobile operators. In 1998 a phone call abroad still cost €1.63 per minute, but by 2014 this had been reduced to 19 cents. From April 2016 the surcharges for a phone call were capped at five cents per minute.

Roaming costs play an important role in the roaming market, which grew by 630% in 2007-2013.

Once the portability regulation enters into force in the first half of 2018, it will also be possible to watch [online content from a subscription in the home country](#) when abroad at no extra cost.

The cost of roaming data costs in the EU in the past ten years (source European Commission):

Cost of 1 MB	Year
€6	2007
70 cents	2012
20 cents	2015
Domestic price + five cents	2016
Domestic price	2017

Parliament fights for lower whole sale price for roaming

Following the original Commission proposal, the European Parliament and the Council negotiated an agreement on the wholesale price of roaming, which is the price that a telecom company pays to another telecom company for the use of the network by customers abroad.

Parliament succeeded in achieving a lower wholesale cap than the [one initially proposed by the Commission](#).

Spanish EPP member [Pilar del Castillo](#), who led negotiations on behalf of the Parliament, said: “Thanks to the determination of the European Parliament, we got this abolition of roaming charges. We can travel through Europe without being worried about bill shock when we come back home.”

On Thursday 15 June from 11.00 CET Del Castillo will be live on Facebook to answer your questions about the end of the roaming charges.

Find out more

[FAQ on the end of roaming](#)

[Press release: final hurdle towards end of roaming cleared \(April 2017\)](#)

[Briefing: wholesale roaming markets and the roaming regulation](#)

[Briefing: roam like at home by default](#)

[Research paper: the added value of EU policy on mobile telephone roaming charges](#)



The end of roaming: a 10-year battle for Viviane Reding

<https://www.europartv.europa.eu/en/programme/economy/the-end-of-roaming-a-10-year-battle-for-viviane-reding>



Interview with Pilar del Castillo on the end of roaming charges (October 2015)

<http://www.europartv.europa.eu/en/player.aspx?pid=2ac976f2-ed5c-496a-983c-a52900d498e2>