

EU Telecoms deal: Fees on calls across the EU capped by 2019 and 5G network by 2020

- An end to expensive international calls
- New measures to protect smartphone users, including refunds
- An obligatory alert system for emergencies (“reverse 112”)
- 5G network deployed across the EU to make new applications possible
- Connectivity together with competition at the heart of the regulatory framework

EU citizens will have access to a 5G network by 2020 and see the costs of their international calls capped, thanks to a provisional deal reached on Tuesday night.

Parliament and Council (EU co-legislators) provisionally agreed on a reform of EU telecom rules that aims to boost the investments needed to make 5G connectivity available for all EU citizens by 2020, enhance protection of users and introduce a cap on disproportionate fees on calls between EU countries.

Cost of long-distance calls

According to the provisional deal, the fees for intra-EU calls are capped to 19 cents for phone calls and 6 cents for text messages.

Advanced connectivity through high capacity networks

The co-investment model introduced by the provisional agreement aims to create a more predictable investment environment. It encourages existing civil engineering infrastructure to be

used, wherever possible, as well as agreements between operators, where these have a positive effect on competition.

More protection for users of smartphones

Telecom providers should use encryption to prevent and minimise the impact of security incidents on users.

Among the provisions enhancing users' rights, the draft deal obliges providers to notify consumers to help them better monitor the use of time or volume billed; it ensures equivalent access for end-users with disabilities to electronic communications; it makes it easier for consumers to compare offers; it makes it easier for consumers to switch operator and to receive compensation if the operator takes too long to carry out the switch.

Contracts, equipped with **a concise and easily readable** contract summary, should contain information on consumers' rights to refunds and compensation:

- the right to a refund upon request, for consumers using pre-paid services, of any remaining credit if switching operator,
- any charges due to early termination of the contract,
- any compensation and refund arrangements which apply if contracted service does not meet quality levels or if the provider responds inadequately to a security incident, threat or vulnerability.

The user should retain the right to transfer a number to another provider for a minimum of one month after the date on which the contract ends, unless the user explicitly gives up that right.

Other provisions call for access to contractual information and emergency services to be guaranteed for users with disabilities.

Reverse 112 to alert in the event of a terrorist attack

A "reverse 112 system", introduced by MEPs, will ensure citizens are alerted by SMS in the event of imminent major emergencies and disasters, such as a terrorist attack or a natural catastrophe. It will be possible to send alerts by mobile apps too, and geo-localisation tools will be used for more accurate caller location. Member States will have 18 months to implement it, after transposition.

5G in the EU by 2020

This provisional agreement also lays the groundwork for 5G to be deployed across Europe, on which an increasing number of sectors and new wireless communications technologies rely. This will make the use of many applications possible, from connected vehicles to smart cities and e-healthcare.

The agreement includes the [provisions already agreed in March](#) on the availability of radio spectrum for 5G by 2020 in the EU, namely:

- 20 years investment predictability for spectrum licences,
- timely release of spectrum,
- regulators can intervene more easily,
- predictability for all market players
- enhanced coordination and peer review of planned radio spectrum assignment procedures.

BEREC - key role in implementing the updated telecom legislation

The provisional deal gives the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC) a role to increase consistency in the implementation of electronic communications legislation across the EU.

Quotes

[Pilar del Castillo Vera](#) (EPP, ES), Industry Committee rapporteur on the Telecom Code, said: "While safeguarding competition, Parliament's position on the Code aims to a more predictable investment environment. Together with the guarantee of a faster time to market of spectrum resources, this provision will simplify regulatory intervention and ensure greater consistency and predictability in spectrum assignment - crucial for Europe to respond to the challenges raised by the development of 5G communications."

[Dita Charanzová](#) (ALDE, CZ), rapporteur for Internal Market Committee opinion on the Telecom Code, said: "Cheaper phone calls are a victory for all EU citizens. I hope to this a first step towards an EU where domestic and international calls will cost the same. The Reverse 112 system ensures a safer Europe. Our citizens need to get clear, correct and quick information in crises. The Parliament achieved many other measures for consumers, from compensation if something goes wrong when switching providers to greater protections for persons with disabilities, to guaranteed access to affordable internet for all."

[Evžen Tošenovský](#) (ECR, CZ), Industry Committee rapporteur on BEREC, said: "The modernised telecommunications rules confer on BEREC a number of new responsibilities. I believe the agreed rules governing BEREC and the BEREC Office make them fit for this purpose, without changing their well-functioning basic architecture. As a next step, we should make sure that the BEREC Office is adequately staffed to provide the full support to the work of telecoms regulators."

Next steps

Once the Parliament and the Council approve this provisional deal, Member States will have two years to transpose the Electronic Communications Code into national law.

Further information

[EP briefing - Telecom code](#)
[EP briefing - BEREC](#)
[Procedure file - Telecom code](#)
[Draft report - Telecom code](#)
[Procedure file - BEREC](#)
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Contacts

Raluca Viviana HULUBAN

Press Officer

 (+32) 2 28 41498 (BXL)

 (+33) 3 881 74715 (STR)

 (+32) 498 98 33 34

 [@EP_Industry](https://twitter.com/EP_Industry)

 raluca.huluban@europarl.europa.eu
