



End of roaming charges for travellers in the European Union: how will the Commission make it work?

Dismantling roaming charges, when travellers call, send messages or surf on their mobile devices while abroad, has been one of the biggest success stories in Europe. In the last mile before the full end of roaming surcharges as of 15 June 2017, some more specific cases have to be addressed.

WHAT IS «ROAM LIKE AT HOME»?

- ▶ «Roam like at Home» is aimed at people who travel in the EU for work or leisure. They spend more time at home than they do abroad, and they make most of their calls, texts and use data in their home country.

This means that:

- ▶ Travellers can call, text and surf on their mobile devices when abroad in the EU for no extra charge than the price they pay at home.
- ▶ When offering roaming, telecom operators operating in a given EU country must include a «Roam like at Home» option in contracts they offer to people who live in that EU country.

WHAT DOES THE COMMISSION PROPOSE TO MAKE IT WORK?

- ▶ «Roam like at Home» is not meant to be used for permanent roaming.
- ▶ This is why the Commission wants to protect:
 1. the markets from abuses and distortions
 2. and consumers from adverse effects of an increase in domestic prices

- ▶ For national packages, the Commission proposes specific solutions to protect consumers from possible domestic price increases:

For pre-paid metered contracts: when you go abroad, you can Roam like at Home up the amount of credit remaining for that month. For data, you can use a volume equivalent to the value of your remaining monthly credit at the wholesale roaming data price cap (currently being debated between the European Parliament and Council).

***Example:** Zoran has a €20 pay per month and go (pre-paid) contract for data, calls and texts. By the time he goes for his holiday, Zoran has €13 credit remaining on his card. Zoran can enjoy the value of his remaining credit (€13) for the time he is away, with a volume of data equivalent to the value of this credit (€13) (he gets the equivalent of €13 worth at wholesale roaming data price cap, i.e. 0.85 cent/MB, **meaning more than 1.5 GB**. In other words, Zoran gets in roaming the volume he has paid for in terms of wholesale data cap.*

For the most competitive contracts that offer data at very low domestic prices, below the wholesale cap: when you go abroad you will continue to enjoy your full allowance of calls and texts. For data, you will have twice the volume of data equivalent to the value of your monthly contract in wholesale roaming data price caps.

***Example:** with his €70 per month contract, Tim living in Netherlands gets unlimited calls, texts and data for his smartphone. When he travels abroad on holidays, he will have unlimited calls and text. For data, he will get twice the equivalent of €70 worth of data at the wholesale roaming data price cap, i.e. 0.85 cent/MB according to the Commission wholesale proposal, **meaning more than 16 GB** in this case. While roaming, he will get twice the volume he has paid for.*

HOW DOES THE COMMISSION PLAN TO PROTECT CONSUMERS AND MARKETS?

- ▶ Operators can ask the consumers to prove that they live or have stable links to a specific country before including «Roam like at Home» in the contract.
- ▶ Operators can only use the information they already gather for billing purposes to check to what extent customers are using mobile and data services abroad compared to their consumption at home.
- ▶ If, over a 4-month period, billing data suggests that a consumer has been more abroad than at home, but also consumed more data while travelling in the EU, the operator can send a **warning message**. **This message will warn the consumers that they have two weeks** to inform their operator about their travel situation, or to change their travel or use patterns. Only a very small roaming charge (no more than the wholesale roaming charges, currently debated between the European Parliament and Council) can then be applied.