

News Release

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Cheaper roaming tariff charges come into force

The fees that consumers pay to make or receive mobile phone calls while travelling abroad in any EU member state have decreased for the fourth consecutive year as from today.

The maximum per-minute roaming charge for making a voice call in the EU decreased to **35 cents a minute** from 39 cents, whereas the maximum roaming charge to receive calls has dropped to **11 cents a minute** from 15 cents. The following table provides information on the applicable EU roaming rates. These rates only apply to calls made and received within the EU. Tariffs to calls to countries outside the EU may vary.

"Eurotariff" Price Ceiling	Outgoing Roaming calls	Incoming Roaming calls	Outgoing Roaming SMS
Excluding VAT and duty tax (on a per minute basis)	35c	11c	11c
Including 18% VAT and duty tax (on a per minute basis)	42c5	13c4	13c4

The European Union's retail price caps establishing the "Eurotariff" roaming charges first took effect on July 1, 2007. Since then, they have been progressively lowered on the 1st of July of each consecutive year.

The rules set by the EU also require that mobile service providers charge on a per second basis for all voice calls, made or received, to ensure that consumers only pay for what is consumed. However, it is important to note that service providers may charge a flat rate for the first 30 seconds with per second billing being applied thereafter.

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Service providers will continue to inform their clients automatically, by means of an SMS whenever they enter another EU Member State. Personalised information on the roaming charges that apply to make and receive calls, send SMSs and data services according to the subscriber's plan will be provided. This service is free of charge.

Service providers may offer their clients the opportunity to deliberately opt out from the "Eurotariff" roaming charges, in favour of alternative roaming price plans which may suit individual clients calling patterns.

Other rules came into force across the EU during the past year with the aim of preventing mobile phone users from running up large data bills when overseas, thus offering greater protection to users visiting an EU country. These rules specify that users should be automatically cut off when their monthly cost of internet usage abroad reaches the limit chosen by the user, which by default is €50, excluding VAT. Prior to the cut-off, subscribers are to receive a warning when 80% of this limit is used. As soon as the limit is reached, data services are stopped unless the subscriber asks his service provider to extend the limit. Accessing the internet via your mobile phone while abroad is called "data roaming".

The cost for sending an SMS while abroad is capped at 11 cents. Subscribers are not charged when receiving SMSs while abroad.

For more information you may log on to our website www.mca.org.mt.