

# Abolition of roaming charges: Europeans make the most of their mobile communications while travelling

According to the European Commission's [interim report](#) on the effects of the end of roaming charges on 15 June 2017, published today, Europeans have made the most of their new digital rights when travelling in the EU and the European Economic Area (EEA). The use of mobile data has grown five times on average compared to the levels before June 2017. The number of phone calls made by travellers has roughly doubled compared to the previous period.

Andrus **Ansip**, Vice-President for the Digital Single Market, said: *"One and a half years ago, roaming charges ended when travelling in the EU. Together with other digital rights, such as the end of unjustified geoblocking and the portability of content, this is a good example to demonstrate how the EU can deliver for the benefits of its citizens in their daily life. We also need to continue making Europeans aware of their digital rights so that they can really make the most of the new possibilities."*

Mariya **Gabriel**, Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society, added: *"Today we can see the tangible benefits following the abolition of roaming charges in the EU. The good news is that Europe is now a reality for people using their mobile phones freely when travelling abroad. I am grateful to operators who manage to turn demands for more data and voice calls into new opportunities."*

There is a clear trend towards increased demand following the end of roaming charges. According to a recent [Eurobarometer survey](#) habits have clearly changed, with for instance 34% of travellers now happy to go online while roaming as much as they do at home, compared to just 15% prior to June 2017. In contrast, the share of those who never use their mobile data while abroad dropped to 19% compared to 42% before the end of roaming charges. At the same time, consumer awareness remains high: 62 % of Europeans are aware that roaming charges have ended in the EU/EEA and 69% think they, or someone they know, benefit or will benefit.

Furthermore, the end of roaming charges has helped increasing mobile broadband take-up and 4G coverage. Notably, EU-wide 4G coverage has reached 90.8% in the end of 2017 (compared to 85.6% in the end of 2016).

Mobile operators have largely abided by the new rules, as a result of vigilant monitoring from national regulators and the Commission. The safeguards foreseen in the Roaming Regulation to avoid distortions on domestic markets, namely the sustainability derogation and fair use policy, have worked adequately and where needed.

**Commission continues to monitor implementation**

The Commission, in close cooperation with national regulators, which are directly responsible for ensuring implementation, will continue to monitor developments on mobile markets in Member States to make sure operators continue to follow the new rules and consumers benefit from the end of roaming charges. As mandated by the European Parliament and Council of the EU, the Commission will publish a comprehensive report on the review of the 'roam like at home' rules in December 2019.

## **Background**

Since [15 June 2017](#) and as a concrete delivery of the [Digital Single Market](#), Europeans can use their mobile phones (calls, SMS and data) when travelling in the EU without paying extra [roaming](#) charges. This means travellers can use their phone when they travel just like they do at home, without any fear of high phone bills.

Prior to that date, the Commission had been working for a decade to reduce and ultimately end the additional roaming charges that telecoms operators imposed on their customers each time they crossed a border while using their mobile device on holiday or during business trips. Between 2007 and 2016, roaming prices decreased by more than 90%, and [prices fell for the final time in April 2016](#). In 2015, based on a proposal of the European Commission, both the European Parliament and the Council agreed to [end roaming charges for people travelling in the EU](#). To make this happen, as mandated by the European Parliament and the Council, the Commission adopted a [fair use policy and sustainability mechanism](#) in December 2016, and made proposals for a wholesale review which lead to new [wholesale roaming prices](#), finally adopted by the co-legislators in May 2017.

## **For more information**

[Interim Report](#) on the effects of the end of roaming charges on 15 June 2017

[Factsheet](#) on the end of roaming charges: How Europeans have been using mobile communications while travelling

[Roaming online](#)

[Joint statement by 3 EU institutions](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[General factsheet on the end of roaming charges](#)

[Detailed factsheet: How does it work?](#)

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