

ROAMING CHANGES

The mandate has been agreed for negotiations with the European Parliament on extending the duration of the "roam-like-at-home" experience for mobile users across the UE.

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Four years after the elimination of roaming charges in the UE on June 15, 2017, the Portuguese Presidency of the Council will start negotiations with the European Parliament to recast the rules on roaming services. Regulation (UE) 2015/2120, used to abolish roaming service charges, will remain in force until June 30, 2022. As a result, Member States' ambassadors have agreed on a negotiating mandate to extend the current regulatory framework on roaming on public mobile communications networks in the UE.

The increase in the use of voice, SMS and, in particular, citizen data roaming services does suggest that there are benefits in abolishing roaming charges. Nevertheless, the European authorities consider that a true internal telecoms market requires the complete elimination of discrepancies between domestic and roaming services.

A market [assessment](#) carried out by the Commission on November 29, 2019, shows that, in essence, not only has there been no change in the level of competition, but that it is not expected to change. Considering also that there is no single mobile network covering all member states, providers depend on access from different operators in the visited member states to provide mobile communication services to their customers across the UE, the Commission concludes that the market is not ready to remove the current regulation.

In addition to measures for certain segments, the proposal establishes that the duration of the free "roam-like-at-home" experience should be extended for another ten years, until 2032. Wholesale prices, for example, will be increased, as is essential to ensure the sustainability of the market, from €0.004/sec and €2.00 for SMS messages and per gigabyte of data transmitted to €0.007/sec and €2.25 respectively.

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