



For immediate release: Tuesday 5th July, 2011

EU DATA ROAMING RULING IS A MASSIVE WIN FOR CONSUMERS

- **End to roaming scandal: extortionate data roaming costs in the EU to be capped**
- **New costs: mobile internet to cost no more than 81p per megabyte from July 2012, falling to around 40p by 2014**
- **Slash cross-border charges: plans to align home and abroad roaming rates by 2015**
- **Stung: nearly half of Brits (49%) have returned home to a large bill after using their mobile phone abroad^[1] – average post-holiday mobile bill is £149^[2]**
- **Unfair: 83% of mobile phone users believe current charges too high^[3]**
- **Holiday Brits: 33 million plan to take their mobile abroad with them this summer^[5].**

On Wednesday the EU will announce dramatic measures that will put an end to premium charges when using mobile data services in the EU, making it cheaper for people with smartphones to use internet on their devices whilst abroad. The new data roaming charges will cost no more than 81p per megabyte when the new ruling comes into force on 1st July 2012 and will fall to around 40p by 2014.

Ernest Doku, technology expert at uSwitch.com, says: “This has not come a moment too soon. People have been paying extortionate prices for the privilege of using their mobile abroad and millions have been stung by a nasty bill on their return.

“Even though the EU made a tentative first step to curb costs last year through the introduction of the €50 cap, it didn’t go far enough. The cap simply limited the amount people could use their phone, rather than the high prices they were being charged. By lowering call and text charges to a manageable level, consumers now have the freedom to roam at an affordable cost. With more than ten million smartphones now in circulation in the UK^[4], this will be welcome news to gadget lovers.

“Holidaymakers will be able to seek better roaming deals when abroad by using a different network, while keeping their same phone number and SIM card. This will inject much needed competition into the market and minimise bill shocks for mobile users in the future. It’s just a shame that the Commission had to force the hand of the operators to achieve this.

“People should still note that this ruling doesn’t cover popular holiday destinations in Europe such as Turkey nor many countries further afield. Wherever you are going, it’s still well worth contacting your network before you travel to ensure that you fully understand the cost of using your phone while you are away. Switch off your voicemail and roaming options unless you really need to use them, and remember that international and local SIM cards are a great way to making calls while abroad as you can benefit from far cheaper rates.”

For more information visit www.uswitch.com or call 0800 093 0607

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For further information please contact:

Katherine Cooper, uSwitch.com on 020 7802 2961 or katherinecooper@uswitch.com
John Diviney, Lansons Communications on 0207 294 3696 or johnd@lansons.com
Anna Schirmer, Lansons Communications on 0207 294 3605 or annas@lansons.com

Notes to Editors:

Research carried out online with the uSwitch.com Consumer Opinion Panel in May 2011. Sample size 1,760 UK adults. Calculations based on the fact that 95% of adults surveyed have a mobile phone for personal use. Assuming 48.3m adults (ONS) uSwitch.com calculates that there are 45.9 million mobile phone users in the UK.

1. In response to “Have you ever returned from holiday/travelling abroad to be surprised by a large mobile phone bill?” 16.7% said yes on more than one occasion; 32.2% said yes once.
2. The average cost of respondents’ phone bills was £149.
3. In response to “Do you think the amount mobile phone providers charge for services when you are abroad is reasonable?” 82.7% said ‘no’.
4. When asked ‘do you own a smartphone’ 22% said ‘yes’ - calculations based on the fact that 95% of adults surveyed have a mobile phone for personal use. This means there are 10 million smartphones in the UK
5. In response to: ‘Do you plan to take your mobile phone abroad this year?’ – 71.1% said yes. 71.1% of 45.9 million = 32.63 million.

About us:

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uSwitch.com is the first comparison website to achieve the Plain English Campaign’s Internet Crystal Mark, which is recognised as a standard that a website has clear language, is accessible and easy to use, and has been tested on a sample of its users.

uSwitch.com is dedicated to helping consumers save money whether they have internet access or not. It offers a dedicated call centre, manned by uSwitch customer service representatives, as well as a freepost ‘Send us your bill’ service, whereby customers can post their latest energy bills with their telephone number to FREEPOST USWITCH, to get a free call back from a dedicated customer services representative. The service is also available via fax, email and post. Consumers should fax 0203 214 8417, email CustomerServices@uswitch.com or write to Customer Services, uSwitch.com, Centro 3, 19 Mandela Street, London, NW1 0DU with their postcode and usage details.

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