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EU MOBILE CALL CHARGES TO FALL FROM TODAY

- Call charges in the EU to drop from 35p to 32p per minute – a decrease of 19% since 2009 prices^[1]
- Calls received whilst abroad in the EU to cost no more than 10p per minute – a fall of 42% in two years^[1]
- Just a fifth of Brits (22%) check phone charges before they go abroad – over four in ten (42%) have no idea of the costs^[2]
- Announcement due next week to align UK and EU roaming prices by 2015

The battle against extortionate roaming charges continues as new European Union regulation cuts the cost of making or receiving calls on mobile phones while in the EU from today.

Ernest Doku, technology expert at uSwitch.com, comments: “Consumers have been paying extortionate call charges on their mobile phones abroad for too long. The average cost of a mobile phone bill after returning from holiday now comes in at £149^[2]. But this changes today as under the EU-regulated Eurotariff, consumers will pay a maximum of 32p per minute instead of 35p for making calls, and 10p for calls received while abroad. These changes bring the EU a step closer to its plan to make sure that within the next three years we will have the same pricing structure to use a mobile either at home or abroad.

“By lowering call charges to a manageable level, consumers now have the freedom to make and receive calls at a more affordable cost. 33 million Brits plan to take their mobile abroad this summer^[3], but worryingly only one in five check how much they’ll be charged for using their phone abroad before they go. This cap will directly help those who are blindly racking up bills. Although it is only a small cut, it is a step in the right direction.

“However, this doesn’t touch data roaming charges which are the real sting in the tail when it comes to high bills. We await next week’s announcement from the EU detailing how it plans to address the underlying problem of the lack of competition in the roaming markets.

“Consumers should also note that this regulation doesn’t cover popular holiday destinations outside of the EU that are still in Europe such as Turkey - or anywhere 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 of making calls while abroad as you can benefit from far cheaper rates.”

Eurotariff maximum roaming charge per minute in Euros^[1]

Eurotariff maximum price while abroad	Making a call	Receiving a call	Sending an SMS	Receiving an SMS
Summer 2009	43 cents (39p)	19 cents (17p)	11 cents (10p)	Free
Summer 2010	39 cents (35p)	15 cents (14p)	11 cents (10p)	Free
Summer 2011	35 cents (32p)	11 cents (10p)	11 cents (10p)	Free

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

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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. http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/roaming/regulation/archives/current_rules/index_en.htm
2. In response to “Do you know how much your mobile phone provider charges for using your mobile phone for calls, text, voicemail and internet while you are abroad?” 22.2% said ‘Yes I check the cost before I travel’; 36.3% said ‘I have a rough idea of the cost’; 41.5% said ‘I don't know what the cost is’
3. The average cost of respondents’ phone bills was £149.
4. 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.

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