

EU cuts roaming rates on cellphones

BRUSSELS, BELGIUM - Tourists within Europe can use their smartphones without fear of an outrageous bill waiting at home as this year's summer holidays start. The European Union is cutting maximum mobile data roaming rates by 36% this week.



The new rules, which come into effect on today (1 July), mean that mobile data roaming within the EU will now be up to 91% cheaper in 2013 than it was in 2007, the European Commission said in a statement last week ahead of the change. This is part of a drive to cut prices and remain "relevant in people's lives".

It will now be cheaper to use maps, watch videos, check emails and update social networks while travelling.

Roaming downloads will now cost 45 cents per megabyte, phone calls will cost 24 cents a minute plus value-added tax and sending a text message will cost eight cents plus VAT.

The most drastic change in mobile charges will be in Croatia, which becomes the EU's 28th member state today.

The cost for data roaming will be 15 times lower from July and calling elsewhere in the EU will be 10 times cheaper.

"Operators are free to offer cheaper rates and some have already begun to remove roaming premiums altogether for voice and SMS," the Commission said in its statement.

Source: AFP via I-Net Bridge