

## ROAMING FAQs

### What is international roaming?

International roaming is a service offered by mobile operators that allows you to use your current mobile service with your local operator when abroad. Since your mobile operator does not provide its services outside Malta, it has agreements with foreign operators allowing you to make and receive voice calls, send and receive SMSs, and use other services such as voicemail and data services, whilst you are travelling in other countries.

### Does international roaming include calls and SMSs made from Malta to another country?

No. When calling or sending an SMS from Malta to any other country, this is referred to as international calling or international SMS and not international roaming. This means that any regulations related to international roaming do not apply in case of international calls or SMSs made from Malta to another country and may carry with it different tariffs to those applicable in the case of roaming.

### What should I do before travelling?

Before travelling abroad it is very important that you contact your mobile operator and check:

- whether your subscription allows roaming in the destination country;
- how much you will be charged when using your phone in the destination country, including voice calls, SMS, access to the Internet, and use of voicemail;
- which foreign operator network best fits your needs and offers the cheapest roaming rates, and how to manually choose your preferred foreign operator network when travelling outside the EU; and
- how to activate and make use of other important services (voicemail, call diverts, network selection) while roaming and the charges involved.

**Note:** Make sure you take note of the below information, in case your phone is lost or stolen while you are travelling.

- Your mobile handset serial number (IMEI number) generally located underneath the battery of your mobile phone, it can also be retrieved by pressing \*#06# on your handset; and
- Your mobile operator customer care number.

### What happens when I am roaming in an EU country?

As from the 15<sup>th</sup> June 2017, when travelling in any EU country, you will be charged the same as if you were using your mobile phone at home referred to as Roam Like At Home (RLAH). In this respect when roaming in EU countries your domestic rates will apply, however, there are a few exceptions which will be discussed into further detail below.

### What happens when I am roaming outside the EU?

The RLAH measure does not apply in countries outside the EU, however in accordance with the EU Roaming Regulations there a number of consumer protection measures which are applicable whilst roaming in these countries.

We suggest you check with your mobile operator how much you will be charged for making and/or receiving calls and SMSs, data usage, and voicemail. If you decide that you want to disable any of

the above facilities to avoid such charges, enquire with your service provider to guide you accordingly.

### **Can I benefit from the Roam Like at Home (RLAH) tariffs when I am on ships or planes within the EU?**

In most cases, when travelling on ships and planes, the EU Roaming Regulation would not apply. There could be circumstances when cruising in the vicinity of an EU territory (such as rivers, lakes or along the coast) where you may connect with a typical mobile network.

### **In which European countries can I benefit from the RLAH tariffs?**

RLAH tariffs apply when travelling in EU member states and also in European Economic Area (EEA) countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway).

#### **EU Countries**

- |                  |           |               |                  |
|------------------|-----------|---------------|------------------|
| – Austria        | – Estonia | – Italy       | – Portugal       |
| – Belgium        | – Finland | – Latvia      | – Romania        |
| – Bulgaria       | – France  | – Lithuania   | – Slovakia       |
| – Croatia        | – Germany | – Luxembourg  | – Slovenia       |
| – Cyprus         | – Greece  | – Malta       | – Spain          |
| – Czech Republic | – Hungary | – Netherlands | – Sweden         |
| – Denmark        | – Ireland | – Poland      | – United Kingdom |

#### **EEA Countries**

- Iceland
- Liechtenstein
- Norway

### **What is domestic pricing for the purpose of the new RLAH tariff?**

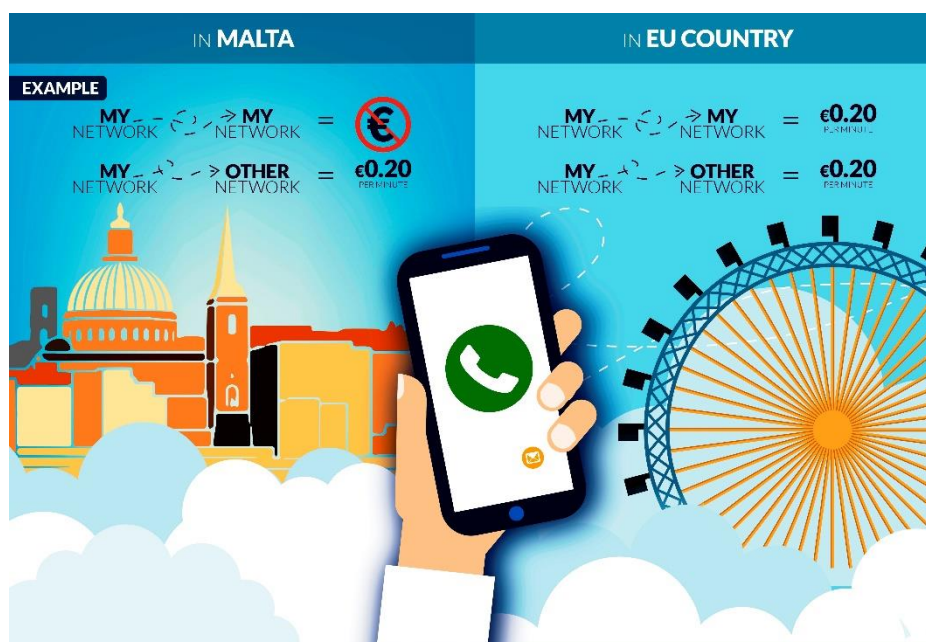
Domestic pricing means the amount charged on a per unit basis for calls, SMSs and data made whilst using your mobile in the Maltese Islands. The domestic price differs from one tariff plan to another and even between service providers.

The EU Roaming Regulation states that the domestic retail price used for calculating a RLAH tariff, could be at a maximum, the price for a call/SMS made to a network other than the one you are subscribed to whilst in Malta. This is also referred to as the **off-net rate**.

Example 1: If you are subscribed to a mobile package where you enjoy unlimited calls to all networks, when calling from another EU country to Malta or to any other EU country you will not be charged for any calls.



*Example 2: Your mobile package includes unlimited calls to the same network you are subscribed to (on-net calls) and a charge of €0.20 per minute for calls made to subscribers of other networks (off-net calls). However, when calling someone on the same network you are subscribed to whilst roaming in an EU country, the **off-net domestic** rate of €0.20 per minute could apply.*



**Note:** You will not be charged for any calls received whilst travelling within the EU, however, charges may apply if you travel outside the EU.

**Are there scenarios when RLAH would not be applicable when travelling in any EU country?**

Yes, your service provider may decide not to apply RLAH whilst you are roaming in any EU countries in cases when you do not have proof of a normal residence or stable links entailing a frequent and substantial presence in the Maltese Islands.

Your service provider may request certain information (e.g. official identification document, declaration by employer and/or academic body etc.) upon concluding your contract or after it has monitored your usage pattern for four consecutive months and determines that your roaming usage is higher than your domestic use.

If you fail to provide such sufficient proof your service provider can start applying the following surcharges.

- Calls capped at a surcharge of €0.032/minute (excluding VAT and excise tax);
- SMSs capped at a surcharge of €0.01 (excluding VAT and excise tax);
- Data capped at a surcharge of €4.5/GB (excluding VAT and excise tax).

### **What is Fair Use Policy (FUP)?**

The FUP is a measure mobile telephony services providers may implement in the case of RLAH to prevent abusive and anomalous usage in an EU country, such as the use of roaming services other than for periodic travel.

### **In which scenarios can the FUP be applicable?**

FUP may be applicable in cases of metered (per unit basis) data for pre-paid subscribers and/or open data bundles.

### **How can the FUP be determined in the case of metered data for prepaid subscribers?**

If you are on a pre-paid basis and your domestic unit price of data works out less than the wholesale rate of €4.5/GB, your service provider may apply a data limit whilst roaming in the EU. The data limit is calculated by dividing the remaining credit available on your card when you start using data roaming services (excluding taxes) by €4.5 to establish your data limit in GB. For the purpose of the EU Roaming Regulation there are 1,000MB in every GB and 1,000KB in every MB.

### **How can the FUP be determined in the case of open data bundles?**

Open data bundles can be classified into two; packages which offer unlimited data and packages for which the domestic unit price of data is less than the wholesale rate.

#### **Unlimited data**

Your national mobile bundle includes unlimited data, your operator must provide you with a large volume of roam like at home data depending on the price of your mobile bundle.

Your operator should clearly inform you of this roam like at home data allowance. In case you use more data while roaming than the data allowance foresees, you may have to pay a small charge which amounts to €4.5/GB.

If you want to check the operator's calculation, here is how: the roaming data volume must be at least twice the volume obtained by dividing the price of your mobile bundle (excluding VAT) by €4.5. For your information, €4.5 is the maximum price that your operator has to pay the foreign operator for 1 GB of data when you are abroad in the EU during 2019.

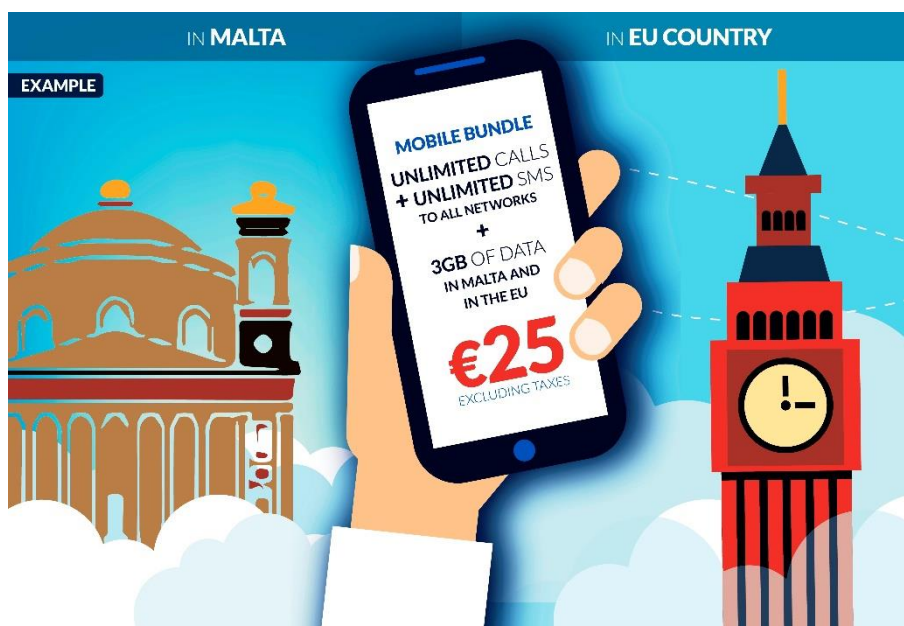
*Example: At home, you have a mobile bundle including unlimited calls, SMS and data for €35 excluding taxes. When travelling in the EU, you get roam like at home for unlimited calls and SMS, and at least -15.56GB of data ( $2 \times (35/4.5) = -15.56$ ).*

## Not unlimited data

If your operator has not explicitly informed you of a roaming data limit, you can benefit while abroad from the full amount of data under your domestic contract.

The operator is only entitled to apply a roam like at home data limit in 2019 in case you pay less than €2.25/GB of data used. The actual limit depends on the monthly amount you pay for your mobile contract. The limit is calculated as in the previous answer.

*Example 1: At home you have a mobile bundle including unlimited calls, SMS and 3 GB of data for €25 excluding taxes. In this case,  $€25 / 3\text{GB} = €8.33/\text{GB}$ . When travelling in the EU, you get roam like at home with unlimited calls and SMS, and 3 GB of data, exactly like at home.*



*Example 2: At home you have a mobile bundle including unlimited calls, SMS and 15 GB of data for €25 excluding taxes. The calculation is  $€25 / 15\text{GB} = €1.67/\text{GB}$ . When travelling in the EU, you get RLAH with unlimited calls and SMS, and at least 11.11 GB of data ( $2 * (25/4.5) = 11.11$ ). If the operator wishes to apply such a data limit while roaming, they must clearly inform you of the volume available and whenever you have consumed that volume while abroad.*

## Can my service provider offer me a plan explicitly for local use without the facility to use my services outside the Maltese Islands?

Yes, the EU Roaming Regulation allows your service provider to offer tariff plans which can only be used locally. However, your service provider cannot offer an add-on package allowing the use of roaming services on top of this tariff plan.

## Will I be informed on how much calls, SMSs and data will cost whilst roaming?

Yes, when you first arrive in any foreign country you will automatically receive a welcome notification (generally by SMS) including:

- Basic personalised roaming charges that apply when making and receiving calls (when applicable), sending of SMSs and data;
- A freephone number you can contact to obtain more information; and
- Information on the possibility to access the 112 emergency number free of charge.

Should you not wish to receive any notification referred to above, you can opt-out at any time free of charge by contacting your mobile operator. Nonetheless, you can opt-back in at any time free of charge.

**Note:** Roaming related notifications should be sent by your service provider even when travelling outside the EU.

### **Is there a mechanism which prevents me from receiving high bills related to data services?**

Your service provider is required to enable you to control how much you spend on data services. To ensure that you do not accidentally run up huge bills when you connect to the Internet using your mobile phone or other mobile device whilst roaming a cut-off mechanism applies.

- Your data roaming limit is automatically set at a level which is close to, but does not exceed €50 excluding VAT per month whilst travelling (not exceeding €61.36 if including VAT and duty tax);
- Should you not wish to benefit from this automatic cut-off, you can opt-out at any time free of charge by contacting your mobile operator;
- Mobile operators may offer you other data roaming limits with different (higher or lower) maximum monthly financial or equivalent volume limits; and
- A request from your part to remove the default cut-off limit or opt for another limit shall be carried out within one working day from receipt of your request, free of charge and without any other conditions or restrictions.

In addition to the above, the Roaming Regulation also stipulates that your service provider shall send you the following notifications.

- When you reach 80% of the agreed financial or volume cut-off data-roaming limit (i.e. €50/month excluding taxes) you will receive a notification on your mobile phone or other mobile device; and
- When you reach the agreed limit, you will receive a notification informing you of the procedure to be followed if you wish to continue to use the data service in that particular month and the cost of additional data. If you do not respond as prompted, your operator will cut off the data service for that month.

**Note:** This cut-off mechanism applies whether roaming in an EU country and also outside the EU. In cases where such mechanism cannot be provided when travelling outside an EU country, your mobile operator shall inform you in your notification message once you enter such country.

### **How can I start benefitting from the RLAH?**

The Roaming Regulation requires that all mobile phone operators offer you the RLAH tariff whether you are a pre-paid or a post-paid customer. It is important to note that:

- You will **automatically benefit** from this tariff, unless you choose a different roaming package with different tariffs for calls made from an EU country;
- Your mobile operator may offer **other roaming packages**, in addition to the RLAH tariff. Such packages may exceed the RLAH charges, but on the other hand, the package may be more beneficial to your specific requirements. Hence, it is advisable to visit the service providers' website or contact them; and
- You **may switch to or from** the RLAH to another tariff at any time free of charge.

### **I am subscribed to an alternative roaming package, can I remain on this tariff plan?**

Yes. Your service provider will contact you and will inform you whether you would like to remain on the alternative roaming package. If you decide to remain on the package, you will not experience

any change, however, if you do not do anything, your service provider will switch your plan to the RLAH tariff plan.

**Where can I find more information on how much I will be charged whilst roaming in the EU?**

While the purpose of these FAQs is to give you a general overview on the EU Roaming Regulation, your service provider can provide you with further benefits whilst on the RLAH tariff, such as not applying a fair use policy. In this respect, should you wish to enquire about the rates applicable to your particular plan whilst roaming, we invite you to first contact your mobile service provider.

**Where can I find further information on the EU Roaming Regulation?**

You can contact our offices on 21336840 or send us an email on [customercare@mca.org.mt](mailto:customercare@mca.org.mt) and we would be more than willing to help you. Further information is also available on the [EU website](#)

**Note:** These FAQs are without prejudice to the legal obligations on mobile network operators established in Regulation (EU) No 531/2012 on roaming on public mobile communications networks within the Union.