

**Contact:** Sébastien Pant: [press@beuc.eu](mailto:press@beuc.eu) - Phone: +32 (0)470 13 47 38  
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### Potential end in sight for intra-EU call surcharges

Today, the European institutions have agreed to abolish the charges telecom operators can add when consumers call somebody based in another EU/EEA country, but only by 2029. This should mean that international intra-EU calls cost no more than the price of a domestic call.

However, it is a missed opportunity that these surcharges were not abolished now, as the European Parliament was calling for, because consumers will continue to pay disproportionate and unjustified surcharges for the coming years.

At least the EU managed to avoid the worst-case scenario where the existing caps on these surcharges would have lapsed in May 2024, potentially causing price hikes for consumers.

BEUC has called for an end to these surcharges, especially after roaming charges came to an end in 2017. Currently, surcharges for calling another EU/EEA country are capped at €0.19/minute, and SMS at €0.06/minute.

Ursula Pahl, Deputy Director General of the European Consumer Organisation (BEUC), said: "This is a welcome move by the EU institutions but it should be happening sooner than 2029. Consumers often pay huge sums of money to speak to somebody in another country for the simple fact that telecom operators can still apply such excessive surcharges on international calls. The actual cost for these companies to connect these calls is minimal and continues to fall, so it really is a no-brainer to remove them once and for all.

"In a key election year, it is a missed opportunity that the Commission and Member States did not go the full mile and support the Parliament's position to scrap the surcharges sooner. With the end of roaming charges, charges for intra-EU calls are disproportionate and unjustified costs for consumers, and the evidence for getting rid of them is overwhelming."

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