

DECOUPLING ROAMING SERVICES IN THE EU – THE CORPORATE CUSTOMERS' END USER REQUIREMENTS

Introduction – More Competition and Lower Prices through Decoupling

The European Roaming Regulation has presented a long-term solution to the continued high cost of using mobile devices while traveling in the EU (roaming). The directly binding Regulation introduces structural measures to promote competition by allowing customers from 1 July 2014 on to sign up for a cheaper mobile roaming contract, separate from their contract for national mobile services, whilst using the same phone number and SIM card. The process is known as roaming decoupling or separate sales of roaming services.

In addition mobile operators including virtual mobile operators get the right to use other operators' networks in other EU states at regulated wholesale prices to encourage more operators to compete on the roaming market.

Corporate Requirements

In view of the implementation of the new Roaming Regulation 531/2012 on roaming on public mobile communications networks within the Union, INTUG was asked to summarize the end user requirements for corporate customers. This document summarizes these requirements as expressed by INTUG members during the consultation process.

Distinguishing Corporate from Private Customers

Mobile service providers have to be able to distinguish private from corporate customers. This condition is a prerequisite for being able to have different roaming decision and selection flows for corporate and private users as discussed in the following sections.

Threshold Definition and Information Mechanism: Still not Working for Businesses, 2.5 Years after its Introduction.

From 1 July 2010 on consumers have been protected from roaming bill shock through automatic alerting as specified in the roaming regulation.

An extract from the roaming regulation:

- More transparency of roaming charges for consumers: customers receive an SMS and/or a pop-up window when they are crossing borders within the EU and outside the EU to inform them of the price they are expected to pay for making and receiving calls or for using mobile internet.
- Measures to counter data roaming bill shocks: as of 1 July 2012, travelers' data-roaming limit will be automatically set at 50 euros, also when they travel outside the EU unless they have chosen a higher or lower limit.

INTUG is very pleased with these rules. However, in practice they don't work for businesses. 2,5 year after the date of introduction the mechanisms are still not appropriate for businesses. Employees keep getting confusing messages, the mobile

fleet managers don't get the information, neither the possibility to make the decisions on which employees can continue roaming when reaching the roaming limit.

It is absolutely essential for fleet managers to be able to define maximum thresholds on the level of data/voice roaming volumes. The fleet manager should be notified when the actual usage volume reaches the threshold level after which the fleet manager can eventually decide to buy additional roaming capacity for the corporate user. In no case should this decision be left to the travelling employee and under no circumstances should the employee be provided with a means to circumvent this mechanism. Preferably, multiple configurable alerting channels should be offered such as notification by SMS and email.

On basis of the negative experience with the roaming cap, INTUG fears the decoupling will again not result in an implementation acceptable for businesses.

Decoupling: Activation and Selection of Roaming Provider

The decision to allow/disallow use of roaming and the selection of the roaming service provider to use rests with the company only and not with the employee using the mobile device. The implementation should fully support this activation and configuration model. The identification can be done on basis of the SIM-cards linked to the contract. The fleet managers remain responsible for maintaining the "SIM-card – employee" mapping.

Uniform Implementation

The management and use of the roaming services should be made as straightforward as possible by implementing uniform mechanisms both on operator and on EU country level:

- All operators should implement the same usage and management processes
- Each operator should implement the same usage and management processes in the different EU countries in which the operator is active.

About INTUG

INTUG is the international association of business users of telecommunications, bringing together national and multinational user associations throughout the world. With members and contacts in all five continents we have a global presence.

Contact: Danielle Jacobs, Chairman of the Board (+32 495.10.88.51 / danielle.jacobs@intug.org).