



**GSM EUROPE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR  
INFORMATION ON INTERNATIONAL  
ROAMING RETAIL PRICES  
REVISED**

GSM Europe, 29 October 2003

## I. INTRODUCTION

GSM Europe (GSME) is the European interest group of the GSM Association, the global trade association for the world's leading wireless operators. The Association works to promote, enhance and protect the interests of the GSM mobile operator community worldwide and pursues the goal of making wireless work globally. As a global trade association, the GSMA aims to accelerate the implementation of collectively identified, commercially prioritized operator requirements and to take leadership in representing the global GSM mobile operator community with one voice on a wide variety of issues nationally, regionally and globally.

Membership consists of more than 597 network operators that provide GSM, GPRS and 3GSM services based on EDGE or WCDMA. The Association's members serve approaching one billion customers across 206 countries and territories.

GSM Europe, the European Interest Group of the GSM Association, consists of more than 143 network operators that provide GSM, GPRS and 3GSM services. Membership of GSM Europe spans 50 countries and territories across the continent. GSM Europe's operators provide digital GSM wireless services to more than 408 million customers in Europe (September 2003).

GSM is an open, non-proprietary system that is constantly evolving towards new services. One of its great strengths is the international roaming capability which was considered as a revolution to the wireless technology ("one phone, one number all over the world"). GSM has created a truly global communications network by establishing roaming agreements all around the world.

For customers, roaming is the ability to use their phones wherever they travel, where

GSM, GPRS, EDGE and 3GSM (W-CDMA) services are available or an international roaming agreement is in place with the customers' home network operator. The GSM Association has been working, since its creation, on the improvement of all aspects related to international roaming. Demand for roaming was initially limited but the development of advanced services, new user profiles and types of mobile usage is leading towards the development of more sophisticated products and increased demand. At present, roaming prices depend on the home network, the different visited networks (customer are not tied to one specific network) and the destination of the call. As a result, there are many thousands of possible variations of international retail roaming charges in Europe alone.

## II. OBJECTIVES

GSM Europe has developed this voluntary Code of Conduct for European operators for the purpose of enhancing the clarity of international retail roaming price information for consumers. Operators adhering to this Code of Conduct aim to respond to consumer demand in Europe for greater transparency in international retail roaming prices.

The objective of this Code of Conduct is to provide greater consistency and clarity to the range of information available to consumers on charges and available services, so that when away from their home network they are able to make better informed decisions regarding: network roaming choice (network availability), charges, availability of data services, prepay, specific value-added services (such as voice mail, access to customer care, recharge of pre-paid, breakdown service, travel service, medical helpline etc.) coverage and information on how to use roaming services in general.

The delivery of retail roaming information to customers via the customer care services of the home operator is believed to be the most effective tool as it is the easiest and most commonly used by the customer. Increasingly customer care services rely on web-based roaming information. It follows that the Internet is also considered a very effective means to communicate information given its broad use and accessibility across Europe. Other possible options also exist to provide information on roaming and include SMS, MMS, fax on demand, e-mails, WAP pages, a roaming guide, information material at points of border entry/exit, a leaflet accompanying the bill and information via retail outlets.

Providing customers with up-to-date roaming prices is important for any operator. This Code of Conduct aims to enhance transparency by making the best possible information about those prices available to the customer. It must be noted that there are also alternative methods used for providing more transparency in roaming prices. Operators have been introducing new tariff schemes that aim to simplify roaming tariffs. Within the first year of implementation all signatories to the Code were found to be compliant with the measures thereby contained.

### **III. MEASURES TO PROVIDE INFORMATION TO CUSTOMERS**

GSM operators adopting the Code of Conduct will implement at least Measures 1 and 2<sup>1</sup>. Operators are furthermore encouraged to implement any additional measures listed under point 3.

The quoted tariffs should be updated according to the media used (customer service, Website, etc...) at least once a month if changes occur. Where published tariffs are

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<sup>1</sup> Non-EFTA or non-EU countries with low level of Internet access may be exempted from Measure 2, at GSM Europe discretion if justified.

indicative, this should be clearly indicated to the consumer.

Any additional measures, other than those set out below, that operators want to apply and which contribute to the aims of the Code of Conduct are also promoted by this code.

#### **(1) Information via the customer service number of the home operator**

##### **(1) a Voice /SMS**

The customer service branch of the operator will provide the following information:

- Tariff per minute of a call to a fixed number within the visited country;
- Tariff per minute of a call to a mobile number within the visited country [if different from call to fixed number];
- Tariff per minute of a call to a fixed number in the home country;
- Tariff per minute of a call to a mobile number in the home country [if different from a call to a fixed number in the home country];
- Tariff of receiving a call on the visited network when applicable;
- Tariff of sending and receiving an SMS on the visited network when applicable;
- Information on whether unanswered calls are charged and related tariff
- Information on which charging unit (minutes or seconds) applies and

whether set up charges are applicable;

- Numbers and, where appropriate, website addresses of customer care and information services of the visited network (for instance directory services);
- Additional information such as: network display name or code, type of network (900/1800/UMTS), country code and general information with regard to coverage;
- Tariffs should state whether they are inclusive or exclusive of VAT. If VAT is exclusive the VAT rate should be indicated;
- Information on peak and off peak times, if appropriate, for each roaming partner;
- Information on whether conditional call forwarding can cause additional charges and related tariffs when applicable
- Information about availability to toll free numbers by visitors and related tariffs when applicable;
- Where available, information on, and any additional charges for prepay roaming and value-added services such as short codes;
- Information on Inter-standard roaming

Tariffs should be provided in the currency of the home network operator.

#### **(1)b Data Services**

Operators shall inform their customers of the available services that they can use via

GPRS or 3G whilst roaming and the related tariffs.

Operators shall inform their customers of the manner they will be charged for the use of available services (per volume/, per duration/ per event, etc..) and provide the minimum charge, the related tariffs and the increments. The final tariff could be dependant on the visited network.

Operators should inform their customers on which data services are available on pre-pay and the related tariffs.

Example of some available services for which information should be provided when applicable:

- Information on WLAN when provided
- Access to WAP
- Access to Internet/Intranet
- I-Mode
- MMS
- Video

Tariffs should state whether they are inclusive or exclusive of VAT. If VAT is exclusive the VAT rate should be indicated.

Tariffs should be provided in the currency of the home network operator.

#### **(2) Information via the Internet site of the home operator**

On the home page of the operator's website a clearly visible link shall be provided to a section containing roaming information. Alternatively, there can be a general link to tariff information on the home page; roaming information should then be a clearly labeled sub-category.

Information to be provided on the web site will be the same as for customer care [see section III (1)]. Operators will seek to provide the most complete information possible on their web site according to the

specificity of their market and customer needs.

Customers should be able to print information.

Operators should indicate that for information on geographical worldwide roaming coverage, customers can access the GSM association world website at the following web address: [www.gsmworld.com](http://www.gsmworld.com), or, alternatively, on the home page of the operator.

It is recommended that operators include a section of most frequently asked questions and answers related to access to roaming services on their website with the following set of questions as a minimum:

- Can I travel and use international roaming services as soon as I buy my phone?
- If not how can I activate the international roaming service?
- Do you offer the same services, whilst roaming, as I can access in the country where I have my subscription?
- Do I need a new phone (i.e. triband) to travel to certain countries?

### (3) Information via other measures

There are several other means of providing information with respect to roaming prices to customers. The possible choice of one or more of the following measures should be made by the operator according to the value of the measure to the end user. It should be noted that these measures will generally be targeting specific niches in the market. The effort should be proportionate to the perceived need of the end customer.

- **Information via retail outlets**

The operator should ensure that retail outlets that are under the control of that operator are able to provide the means for

customers to access all the information mentioned under section III 1.

Operators should endeavor to ensure that independent retailers have available, at least, the information where a customer is able to obtain precise roaming information. In particular, retail outlets should have available the customer service number of the operator and the address of the web site.

- **Information via SMS/MMS**

The operator should use SMS or MMS as a way of providing basic standard roaming information. Since an SMS message, with the current technology, can at most contain 160 characters, only the most basic information on the various roaming tariffs can be given. Operators should indicate that information is available via their customer services and give the phone number of their customer service.

- **Information via Fax on demand**

The operator should provide to the customers roaming information per fax. Upon request, the consumer will receive a fax with information about the roaming tariffs of the different operators in the requested country.

- **Information via emails**

The Operator should provide to the customers roaming information via e-mail. Such information will be sent to customers via, for example, an automatic response system, a PDF file or plain text e-mail.

- **Information via WAP**

The operator should give its customer the possibility to receive roaming information via the WAP service. Operators should make their best efforts to create a dedicated section for information on retail international roaming.

- **Information via printed material**

Operators should provide information on roaming via different printed means of their

choice such as leaflets, brochures, roaming guides, billboards, etc.

This information could be communicated in different ways such as including or attaching such information in or to the bill, at border points of entry/exit, in retail outlets or by any other means that operators consider appropriate.

#### IV. IMPLEMENTATION

This Code of Conduct is intended to be a document that reflects best practice and should therefore increase consumers' awareness of international retail roaming issues. This Code of Conduct serves as a statement of the current intentions of GSM Europe Members, drawn up for the benefit of customers, in order to facilitate a clearer understanding by such customers of international retail roaming prices and does not create any legally binding obligations.<sup>2</sup> This Code of Conduct is non-binding in accordance with Article 16 section 4 of the Regulations of the GSM Association.

National laws already provide different mechanisms in Europe in relation to consumer protection. These laws are normally also applicable to international roaming tariffs. Individual operators should be aware of and should ensure that they comply with such national requirements, and, where applicable, the transposed EU legislation, notably the provisions of Art 21 (transparency and publication of information) of the current Universal Service Directive (Directive 2002/22 of 7 March 2002)

The original Code of conduct was adopted in June 2001 and came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2001 with 41 signatories.

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<sup>2</sup> This Code of Conduct shall be interpreted and construed in accordance with the substantive laws of Switzerland. This Code of Conduct does not create any legally binding obligations and any disputes arising out of this Code of Conduct shall be submitted to the competent courts of Geneva, Switzerland.

GSM Europe Members, who voluntarily adopt the new measures related to data services contained in the new revised version of the Code of Conduct, will implement the revised Code of Conduct's measures by 1<sup>st</sup> January 2004.

A list of operators who agree to comply with this Code of Conduct will be maintained by GSM Europe and will be available as an annex to the Code of Conduct on the GSM Europe Website: [www.gsmeurope.org](http://www.gsmeurope.org) (hereafter referred to as the List). The implementation of and compliance to the Code of Conduct is being reviewed on a regular basis. The first review was conducted as from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2001, by an independent auditor who produces a report on a regular basis. The review of the revised Code of Conduct (which includes data services) will be conducted as from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2004 with the publication of an implementation report in October 2004. Operators may be added to the List at a later date and can be subject to an audit as from the date of their addition to the List.

When the result of the monitoring by the independent auditor shows that a Listed GSME member is not compliant with the Code of Conduct, GSME will consult the operator and the independent auditor. The consultation period will last -21 days from the date when notification of non-compliance is sent by GSME to the relevant operator together with the findings of the audit concerning that operator. If, following the consultation period, the operator remains non-compliant with the Code of Conduct, GSME will be entitled to remove the name of the non-compliant operator from the List. An operator whose name has been removed from the List can ask to have its name reinstated on the List after demonstrating compliance with the Code of Conduct.

Each operator should designate a compliance officer to act as a point of contact for the independent auditors.

It is intended that this Code of Conduct be a living document. GSM Europe will keep on considering reviewing the Code of Conduct, to take into account technological and commercial developments that occur in the industry.

*GSM Europe, London 29 October 2003*

## ANNEX 1 : List of GSME Operators complying with the Code of Conduct (Voice Services) As per October 2003

**\* Signatories to revised CoC (Data Services) will be assessed from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2004**

Amena; Spain*	TDC Mobil A/S; Denmark
BASE NV/SA; Belgium	Telefónica Móviles España, SA.; Spain*
Bouygues Telecom; France*	Telia Mobile AB Sweden; Sweden*
Connect Austria, Gesellschaft für Telekommunikation GmbH; Austria	Vodafone D2 GmbH; Germany*
E-Plus Mobilfunk GmbH & Co. KG; Germany	Vodafone Hungary; Hungary
EuroTel Bratislava a.s; Slovak Republic*	Vodafone Ireland Plc; Ireland*
KPN Mobile The Netherlands B.V., The Netherlands*	Vodafone Libertel N.V.; The Netherlands
Latvijas Mobilais Telefons SIA; Latvia	Vodafone Malta; Malta*
MobiFon S.A; Romania	Vodafone Omnitel SpA; Italy
Mobilkom Austria AG & Co KG; Austria*	Vodafone Spain; Spain
Optimus Telecomunicações SA; Portugal*	Vodafone Telecel; Portugal
OrangeFrance; France	Vodafone UK Ltd; United Kingdom
Orange Switzerland; Switzerland*	Westel Mobile Telecommunications Ltd; Hungary*
Orange UK; United Kingdom	WIND Telecomunicazioni S.p.A; Italy
O2 GmbH & Co.; Germany*	Xfera Móviles,S.A; Spain (This operator will be compliant with the CoC on first day of commercial launch of 3G services)
O2 Limited; United Kingdom	
O2 Communications Ltd; Ireland	<b>New Signatories (currently being assessed)</b>
O2 B; The Netherlands	Belgacom Mobile, Belgium*
Pannon GSM Telecommunications Plc.; Hungary	Go Mobile; Malta
PTC "Era"; Poland*	HT Mobile Communications LLC,Croatia*
PTK Centertel; Poland	Hutchison 3G UK Ltd, United Kingdom
SFR; France*	TMN, Portugal
Sonera Corporation; Finland	T-Mobile Czech Republic a.s., Czeck Republic*
SONOFON; Denmark	T-Mobile Netherlands B.V., Netherlands*
Swisscom Mobile Ltd, Switzerland*	T-Mobile UK Ltd, United Kingdom*
TIM; Italy	H3G S.p.A.; Italy
T-Mobile Austria GmbH; Austria*	Vodafone Sweden; Sweden
T-Mobile Croatia, Croatia	
T-Mobile Deutschland GmbH; Germany*	
TDC Switzerland AG (sunrise); Switzerland	

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## **Annex 2: GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND DEFINITIONS**

EDGE- Enhanced Data Rates for GSM  
evolution

GSM-Global System for Mobile  
Communications

GPRS-General Packet Radio Service

MMS- Multimedia Messaging

SMS- Short Message Service

UMTS-Universal Mobile  
Telecommunications System

WAP- Wireless Application Protocol

W-CDMA- Wideband CDMA

WLAN- Wireless Lan