

Mobile Phone Roaming Rates to Come Down

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Russia will offer to adopt EU guidelines for mobile phone roaming tariffs in a move that could slash prices currently up to six times higher than in the European Union.

Communications and Press Minister Igor Shchyogolev plans to announce the offer to the EU telecommunications commissioner during Prime Minister Vladimir Putin's visit to Belgium on Thursday, his press secretary told Reuters.

Deputy Communications and Press Minister Naum Marder this month wrote to the country's big three mobile phone firms — Mobile TeleSystems, VimpelCom and MegaFon — to say the issue would be discussed Feb. 24.

Since last July, EU data-roaming bills have been limited to 50 euros (\$70) per month to avoid shocks, unless customers choose higher or lower limits.

The EU said in December that it wanted to level national and roaming tariffs by 2015.

A VimpelCom spokeswoman said mobile phone companies were hoping for government help to alter pricing policies.

"It is important to get help from regulators and the communications ministry because the cost of other operators' services is the basis for our roaming tariffs," the spokeswoman said.

Russia's telecoms regulator filed a case against the big three firms a year ago after discovering tariffs involving roaming exceeded the EU price by three to six times.

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