

Russian Mobile Carriers Waive Data Fees for State-Backed Max Messenger

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People on their phones in Moscow. **Svetlana Nafikova / Moskva News Agency**

Major mobile carriers in Russia have agreed to zero-rate data usage for the domestic Max messenger, the app's developer VK [announced](#) Friday, marking the latest push to steer users toward the state-approved platform and away from foreign messengers.

Starting Aug. 1, voice calls, messaging, file transfers and other digital services within Max will be free of charge for subscribers of MTS, MegaFon, Beeline and T2.

Beeline CEO Sergei Anokhin said the agreement was made due to Max's role as "part of the state's digital infrastructure," the newspaper Kommersant [reported](#). MegaFon, meanwhile, said that carriers aimed to "pool their resources to build a single, unified digital environment."

Russian authorities have aggressively promoted Max since its spring 2025 launch, embedding it within state digital services and requiring pre-installation on all smartphones sold in the country.

Max boasts nearly 70 million daily active users, having [overtaken](#) Telegram in May and June, [according](#) to media audience tracker Mediascope.

The announcement of the zero-rating deal with major mobile carriers follows EU [sanctions](#) against VK over its development of Max.

Brussels claims that Russia's FSB security service had "supervised" the development of Max and said the app has "extensive" surveillance capabilities to monitor communications.

In compliance with the sanctions, Apple and Google removed the VK and Max apps from their app stores.

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