

Table 2.12. Policy developments in international mobile roaming services (since 2010)

Australia	A joint Australia-New Zealand investigation into trans-Tasman mobile roaming services was launched in April 2011. It is being undertaken jointly by the Australian Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy and the New Zealand Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment. A draft report of the investigation was released for public consultation in August 2012. It is expected that the final report will be released in early 2013 and that the governments will respond.
Canada	There have been no developments.
Chile	There are plans to modify this market, particularly to avoid bill shock and to improve transparency in tariffs offered for these services. The work has involved others countries in the region that are part of the UNASUR (www.unasursg.org/), such as ongoing bilateral discussions with Peru or Argentina. UNASUR countries have been working on a joint project to create a unified area in LATAM where roaming tariffs will be the same (see: www.iirsa.org/BancoConocimiento/R/roaming_suramericano/roaming_suramericano_ENG.asp?CodIdioma=ENG). Currently, the Chilean approach has been to discuss roaming services within a trading agreement framework where countries set common rules to operators; for instance, one obligation to charge traffic in seconds (for voice services) and in Kb (for data services).
EU (OECD countries members of EU)	At the end of May 2012, the European Parliament and Council agreed on the final text of the new roaming regulation, which came into force on 1 July 2012. In summary, the new regulation extends anti-bill shock and transparency mechanisms (including the EUR 50 data cap) to EU roamers travelling beyond the EU's borders, and introduces retail caps for data for the first time. It also establishes a mechanism for introducing structural solutions to decouple regulated mobile roaming services from domestic services, to be set out in a EU Implementing Act following a consultation with BEREC, and provides for BEREC guidelines on wholesale access. Specifically the key provisions include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new retail caps establish a downward glide-path between 1 July 2012 and 1 July 2014 with headline reductions in caps from EUR 0.29 (the new cap established on 1 July) to EUR 0.19 for voice for calls made, from EUR 0.08 to EUR 0.05 for calls received, from EUR 0.09 to EUR 0.06 for SMS messages sent, and from EUR 0.70 to EUR 0.20 per MB of data. • This glide path will result, even at the caps, in substantial reductions in roaming tariffs for consumers. Until now prices have stayed close to the caps. • The new wholesale caps for voice, SMS and data reflect the latest BEREC data for estimated maximum wholesale costs in 2014 communicated to the legislators at the end of February 2012 and – as recommended by BEREC – there is, for all services, a retail/wholesale mark-up by at least a multiple of 3 by 2014 to make competitive entry sufficiently attractive for some to occur, so that retail prices may start to diverge from the caps. • The regulation remains technology neutral while providing for the possibility of roamers solely accessing local data services when abroad, while retaining the domestic provider for voice and SMS (“local data breakout” or LBO). • Provision is made for a BEREC opinion and subsequent guidelines on the recommended structural solution(s) and BEREC guidelines on wholesale access – the BEREC opinion was submitted to the Commission on 27 September 2012. This document comprised (a) provisions that in BEREC’s view should be included in the Commission Implementing Acts, and (b) recommendations to facilitate the process of decoupling provisions in Article 5. In addition, the BEREC wholesale access guidelines were published on 1 October 2012 as required by the regulation. MNOs were obliged to publish wholesale access reference offers by 1 January 2013 in addition to continuing to respond to other access requests, in line with the new regulation. • The provisions for wholesale access in the regulation include specific criteria and the provision for NRA intervention should the access reference offer be judged inadequate, as well as the requirement for the above BEREC guidelines to clarify what needs to be included in the reference offer. • A realistic timescale for review of the regulation by 2016 has been included, which allows for an adequate period of time to make an initial assessment of the success of structural measures to facilitate competition through decoupling roaming from domestic services. • The regulation is due to expire on 30 June 2022.
Israel	
Japan	

Korea	In March 2012, the KCC announced an improvement scheme for international mobile roaming services aimed at increasing user awareness of roaming prices and substitutes and promoting transparency of information for roaming services. Details of the scheme include: clarifying comparison of roaming charges to customers by roaming service providers, providing information on roaming services subscription procedures and simulation programs for expected roaming charges on providers' websites, promoting improvement of roaming services-related procedures for customers, and so on.
Mexico	There have been no policy developments regarding international mobile roaming services since 2008. However, Cofotel is currently taking part in a project undertaken by the Latin American Forum of Telecommunications Regulators (REGULATEL), entitled Regional Harmonisation of International Roaming Services. As part of the project, Cofotel collaborates with several regulators in the region to develop an agreed Action Plan to promote regional integration across mobile services.
New Zealand	A joint Australia-New Zealand investigation into trans-Tasman mobile roaming services was launched in April 2011. It is being undertaken jointly by the Australian Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy and the New Zealand Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment. A draft report of the investigation was released for public consultation in August 2012. It is expected that the final report will be released in early 2013 and that the governments will respond.
Switzerland	No major change has occurred during this period. The only modification has been the obligation for telecommunications service providers to better inform their clients about the level of prices charged for roaming services (Article 10a OST). They must also clearly indicate to customers where they can consult current tariffs with the aim of reducing prices. Additionally, they must inform users expeditiously and free of charge (via SMS) of the roaming tariff that will be applied while they travel in a foreign country. The obligation concerning where to consult current roaming tariffs has been effective since 1 January 2010, and the obligation to inform customers while travelling in foreign countries took effect on 1 July 2010.
Turkey	There are no price regulations on wholesale or retail level roaming services. However, according to Article 9 Para. 4 of the By-Law on Consumer Rights, in the event that an international roaming service is used, the subscriber shall be notified of international tariff information, including at least voice and SMS service, via SMS.
United States	Bill shock can happen when a subscriber is charged for unknowingly exceeding plan limits for data, voice or text, or is traveling abroad and incurs unexpected international roaming charges. In 2010, the FCC identified the growing problem of bill shock and proposed rules that would require carriers to send usage alerts to consumers when they approach and reach monthly plan limits, and also to send alerts when they were about to incur international roaming charges. In October 2011, CTIA, the Wireless Association, revised its Consumer Code for Wireless Service to require that its participating carriers – accounting for service to 97% of US wireless customers – provide these alerts without charge and automatically. Subscribers will not need to take any action to receive the alerts. The FCC has added a portal to its website that lets wireless customers know, as carriers begin to implement their voluntary commitments, which carriers are providing this information, via a table showing which carriers are providing which types of alerts. The FCC will regularly update the table to reflect each carrier's progress in providing the agreed-upon alerts. The carriers must provide their subscribers with at least two of the four types of alerts by 17 October 2012, and all of the alerts by 17 April 2013.

Source: OECD