



Joint Statement by EU
and Ukrainian operators
on connectivity in
support of refugees
from Ukraine



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The Russian war against Ukraine has disrupted the lives of millions of Ukrainians. An estimated 4,2 million refugees have left Ukraine to neighbouring countries, from where they are progressively moving also to other European Union countries. In the face of this immediate and growing humanitarian crisis, EU and Ukrainian operators share the conviction that Ukrainian refugees should continue to have affordable access to connectivity to stay in touch with family and friends and to access the Internet and reliable sources of information.

The signatories of this Joint Statement have taken, as of the first days of this crisis, many different actions to help ensure connectivity across the board. EU operators have distributed and will continue distributing millions of SIM cards free of charge to allow Ukrainians to stay connected in the EU. Furthermore, EU operators have offered **free or heavily discounted international calls** and SMS to Ukraine, have enabled free outbound roaming for EU customers in Ukraine, have provided connectivity and charging at central points where refugees gather, have offered donation of essential equipment to Ukrainian operators and maintained essential international connection nodes. In parallel, Ukrainian operators continue to keep the connectivity within Ukraine functioning, despite military aggressions. From the early days of this crisis, Ukrainian operators also ensured **resilience of their networks within the country** and offered **free roaming** to Ukrainian people that fled the war.

In light of this devastating war, the signatories of this Joint Statement from the EU side stand in full solidarity with Ukraine and the Ukrainian people. Recognising the importance of connectivity, in particular in times of crisis and under these exceptional circumstances, EU and Ukrainian operators stand ready to continue making these unprecedented voluntary efforts **to alleviate the consequences of the humanitarian crisis** by providing connectivity support on a collaborative basis to those fleeing their home to safety in the European Union. At the same time, the Ukrainian signatories of this Joint Statement commit **to pass on the full benefits of the voluntary measures applied by their EU counterparts to Ukrainian end users.**

In this context, the signatories underline that, for EU operators free or heavily discounted international calls to Ukraine can be very costly, and so can free international calls for Ukrainian operators to EU countries, due to high unregulated international termination fees charged at wholesale level. At the same time, the Ukrainian operators, operating under war conditions have limited other revenue sources to maintain their networks and services, and are exposed to growing wholesale roaming out-payments for their subscribers now displaced to the EU.

The signatories of this Joint Statement seek to ensure that parties work to establish a **coordinated approach involving efforts on both sides**, facilitated by BEREC and the Ukrainian National Regulatory Authority NCEC. Operators in EU and Ukraine, including those providing transit where relevant, would agree to voluntarily and bilaterally lower wholesale roaming charges and lower the wholesale charges for terminating international calls through commercial agreements, to enable the sustained provision of affordable connectivity to refugees from Ukraine. That coordinated approach would minimise additional costs for both EU and Ukrainian operators, while enabling each to cover their respective costs, in order to enable as best possible communication for those fleeing the horrors of war. In this respect, it is important that operators on both sides of the border do their utmost to ensure that charges for Ukrainian consumers are kept at the minimum.



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For this coordinated approach to be efficient, as many EU and Ukrainian operators as possible, should be part of this joint initiative. This Joint Statement remains open for all operators willing to sign at any time in solidarity with Ukraine.

Facing this emergency situation and with the common aim of solidarity to ensure that Ukrainians seeking refuge can communicate freely

- **the EU operators**, signatories of this Joint Statement, intend to:

Reduce wholesale roaming charges and termination rates:

- *To enable affordable roaming to be offered by Ukrainian operators at retail level, we commit to reductions of wholesale roaming charges towards at most a level allowing to cover the costs of providing the roaming service, taking as a benchmark the wholesale maximum rates defined in Regulation (EU) 531/2012. We, in turn, count on Ukrainian operators to transfer these benefits to their end-users roaming in the EU.*
- *To enable the continued provision of affordable international calls at retail level to Ukraine by EU operators and from Ukraine to EU by Ukrainian operators, we commit, as part of a coordinated approach, to reduce termination rates for calls originated by Ukrainian numbers towards the rates applied for calls originated by EU numbers to other EU numbers. This reduction should apply both to International calls from Ukraine to (i) EU numbers and (ii) Ukrainian SIM cards roaming on an EU network.*
- *Pass on the full benefits of the reduction of termination rates by Ukrainian operators to customers calling from the EU to Ukraine.*

- on their part, **Ukrainian operators**, signatories of this Joint Statement, in response to measures undertaken by EU operators, intend to:

- *Gradually reduce international termination rates for calls to Ukraine originated by EU numbers and calls to Ukraine originated by Ukrainian numbers roaming in the EU, towards the levels allowing EU operators to offer reduced wholesale roaming charges and affordable international calls to end users calling Ukraine, bearing in mind the rates as defined in Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2021/654 and the need for Ukrainian operators to continue offering their services on a sustainable basis.*
- *Pass on the full benefits of the reduction of wholesale roaming charges by EU operators to customers roaming in the EU.*

- *EU and Ukrainian operators intend to operate in good faith, in line with the spirit of this Joint Statement, to prevent fraud, reciprocally providing information on possible violations and agreeing on conditions for the possibilities to exceptionally limit/suspend traffic.*
- *The agreed commitments in this Joint Statement are without prejudice to more favourable terms offered by individual operators or negotiated commercially between individual operators, or to further voluntary initiatives taken by operators in favour of end users from Ukraine. Similarly, it should be recognised that these significant industry-led collaborative efforts are of an exceptional nature and do not constitute a precedent. Further, for the avoidance of doubt, existing individual*



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agreements shall remain valid and, unless voluntarily amended in the framework of these joint efforts (as defined in this Joint Statement) by the respective parties, remain unaffected.

- *This Joint Statement applies for three months as from today, and will then be reviewed to take into account the fast changing situation, its humanitarian objective and whether other longer-term measures by public authorities and/or industry are more adequate. This is without prejudice to the duration of commercial agreements based on this statement, which are generally intended for a minimum period of one month and renewable.*