



BELGIAN INSTITUTE FOR POSTAL SERVICES AND TELECOMMUNICATION

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PRESS RELEASE

BIPT publishes a comparison of the cheapest telecom tariffs on the Belgian residential market

Brussels, 7 May 2015 – For the third time BIPT has compared prices of telecom products on the residential market in Belgium. The price comparison was made on 9 February 2015 and shows the price differences between the cheapest tariff plans of telecom operators in the following market segments at the time: mobile calling postpaid and prepaid, fixed telephony, fixed Internet and triple play bundles.

BIPT compared the 252 tariff plans activated on 9 February 2015 in the official tariff simulator www.besttariff.be. For the various market segments (postpaid and prepaid mobile services, fixed telephony, fixed Internet and triple play bundles) the cheapest tariff plan of each operator was compared for specific standard user profiles (e.g. low, average, heavy use, etc.). For the first time promotions were also taken into account. Promotions are benefits granted when concluding fixed-term contracts, such as reductions on the subscription fee for a few months or reductions on the installation costs. Promotions may be linked to certain terms, e.g. being a new customer of the operator or already being an operator's customer,

These are a few results of the study:

For low to average use of **bundles of telecom products** including fixed telephony, Internet (20 Mbps minimum) and television, taking promotions into account, an important monthly price difference of almost 20 EUR is noticeable between the cheapest tariff plans (from 48.19 EUR to 66.57 EUR/month). Consumers wishing as part of a bundle a more intensive average Internet use (50 Mbps minimum), the monthly price difference, taking promotions into account, between the cheapest tariffs, amounts to more than 20 EUR (from 59.17 EUR to 75.03 EUR). In addition, taking account of promotions can lead to a profit of over 60 EUR/year.

Among the 15 cheapest tariff plans included in the comparison for average use of postpaid **mobile telephony** (120 call minutes, 100 SMS messages and 50 MB) there is a price difference of nearly 144 EUR on an annual basis (from 8 EUR to 20 EUR/month). In case of prepaid average use (100 call minutes and 150 SMS messages) the price difference amounts to more than 175 EUR a year (from 9.38 EUR to 24 EUR/month). The comparison did not cover the tariffs for international calling and international roaming.

For average **Internet** use with limited speed requirements (20 Mbps minimum) the price difference, allowing for promotions, between the 8 cheapest offers is almost 40 EUR (from 26.34 EUR to 66.98 EUR/month). Consumers who want faster Internet (50 Mbps minimum) the price difference also runs to more than 25 EUR (from 29.08 EUR to 56.06 EUR).

The choice of **fixed telephony** provider can also produce considerable savings. On a monthly basis and taking account of promotions the price difference between the cheapest tariff plans for average use during off-peak hours and weekends amounts to almost 15 EUR (from 22.81 EUR to 37.46 EUR/month). Activating certain options, in order to have unlimited calls during off-peak for instance, often results in an extra advantage. The tariffs for international calls were not included in the comparison, as was the case for the telephony service based on the Internet (VoIP).

Summarising it may be said that in 2015 important **price differences** are still apparent between the cheapest offers in the various market segments of the Belgian telecom sector. Therefore consumers can benefit from:

- first identifying their user profile, for instance based on their bill or their personal web space made available by the operator;
- thoroughly comparing the tariff formulas, using BIPT's official tariff simulator www.besttariff.be;
- optimising their bill by activating good options (add-ons);
- possibly switching to another tariff plan or another operator (this can always be done for free in case of a permanent contract, with fixed-term contracts after 6 months and always in case of change of terms of the contract, such as a tariff increase).

By doing so consumers having an average profile, can **save** a lot taking account of price differences between the cheapest tariff plans and promotions, i.e. up to 175 EUR/year for fixed telephony, 144 EUR/year for postpaid mobile telephony, 175 EUR/year for prepaid mobile telephony, 220 EUR/year for triple play bundles.

Attention: The study only compared prices and not any other possible service characteristics (e.g. availability of a helpdesk). For fixed telecom services (telephony, Internet and bundles) the tariff plans are always included regardless of their geographic coverage. Knowing that the market is very dynamic, the comparison made on 9 February 2015 may change very quickly depending on promotions and the launch of new tariff plans.

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