




## 5G & 4G prices in 52 EU & OECD markets in 2026 and post-merger price increases in the 4-to-3 consolidated UK mobile market

A 13-year cross-country econometric study of average monthly and gigabyte prices, price differences between 3-MNO and 4-MNO markets, historic price trends, and statistical analysis using Linear Mixed-effects Models (LMM).

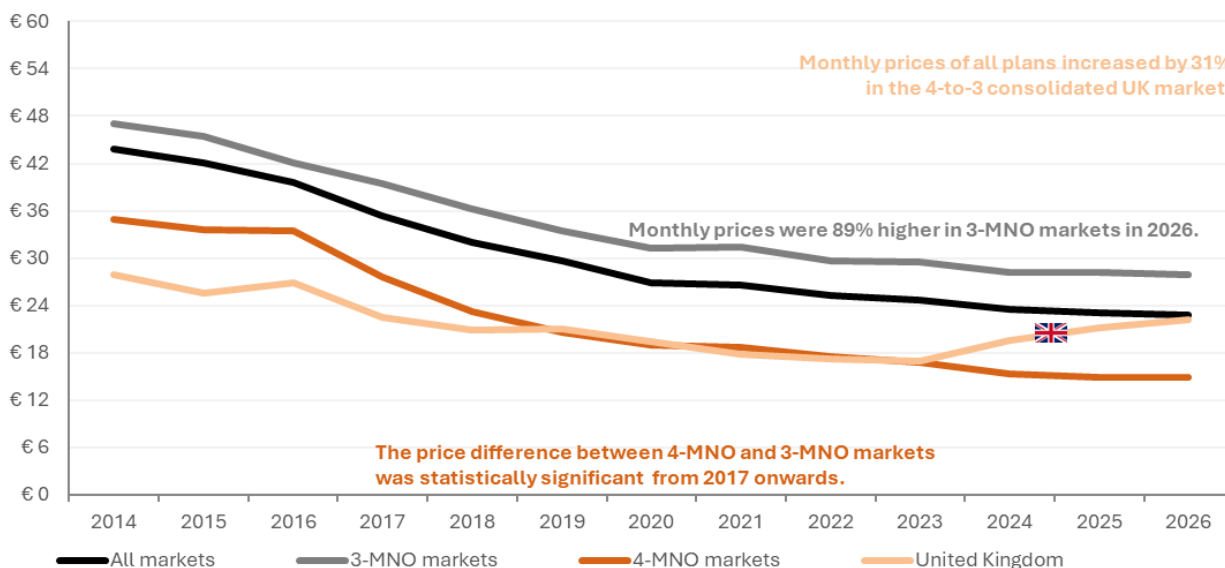
In 2026, average monthly prices across 3-MNO markets were 74% to 153% higher than in 4-MNO markets, while the average gigabyte unit prices were 151% to 375% higher. The differences in the average prices between 3-MNO and 4-MNO markets were estimated using Linear Mixed-effects Models and were statistically significant.

-  Monthly prices increased by an average of 31% in the UK following the Vodafone / Three 4-to-3 mobile merger
-  Contrary to CMA’s fictitious merger simulation, the merger led to higher (not lower) gigabyte unit prices vs. counterfactual
-  CMA’s Chief Economic Adviser, after rubber-stamping Frontier’s dubious merger analysis, left CMA and joined Frontier


Rewheel research PRO study – March 2026.

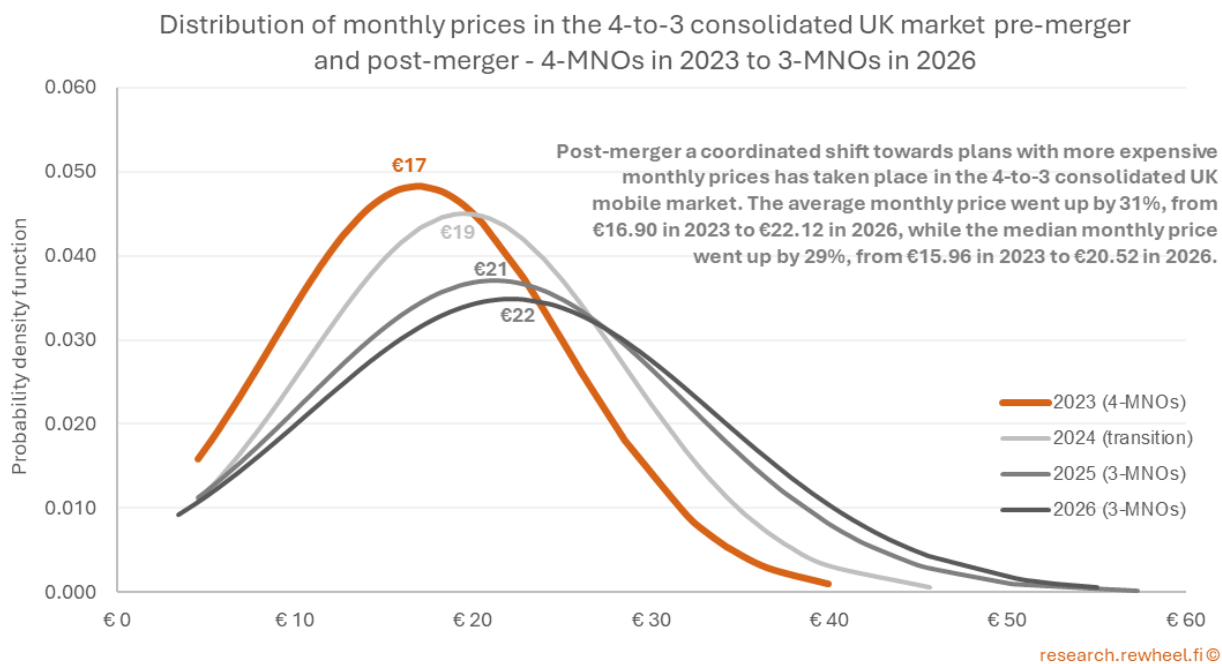
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CMA CHIEF ECONOMIC  
ADVISOR

Average monthly price of 5G & 4G & 3G plans with at least 1000 mins and 0.5 Mbit/s (1 Mbit/s from 2024 onwards) download speed - 2014 to 2026



The average prices across all markets (41 in 2014 increasing to 52 in 2026), 3-MNO and 4-MNO markets were estimated with a Linear Mixed-effects Model (LMM) in Jamovi. [rewheel.fi/research](http://rewheel.fi/research)

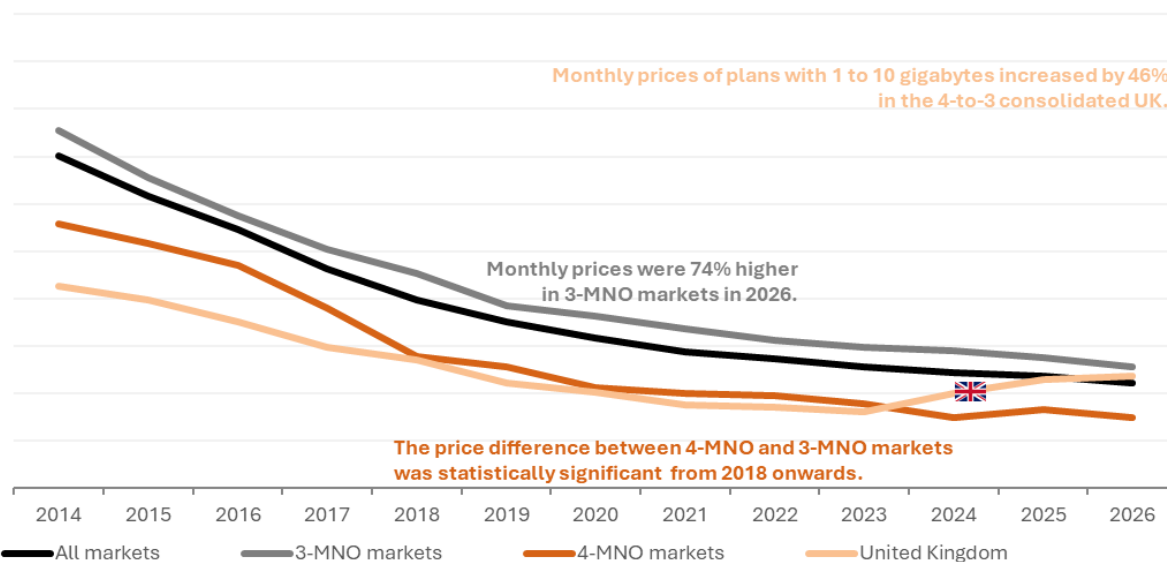
	Decrease (increase) in average monthly price, 2026 vs. 2023	Average monthly price, 2023	Average monthly price, 2026
4-to-3 consolidated UK market 	Post-merger prices went up (+31%)	€ 16.90	€ 22.12
3-MNO Norwegian market	(+9%)	See PRO report	See PRO report
3-MNO US market	-2%	See PRO report	See PRO report
<b>Average across all 3-MNO markets</b>	<b>-5%</b>	<b>€ 29.50</b>	<b>€ 27.90</b>
4-MNO Swedish market	-6%	See PRO report	See PRO report
<b>Average across all 4-MNO markets</b>	<b>-11%</b>	<b>€ 16.70</b>	<b>€ 14.80</b>
4-MNO Danish market	-12%	See PRO report	See PRO report
4-MNO Spanish market	-13%	See PRO report	See PRO report
4-MNO Polish market	-13%	See PRO report	See PRO report
4-MNO Italian market	-16%	See PRO report	See PRO report
4-MNO French market	-17%	See PRO report	See PRO report
4-MNO Japanese market	-22%	See PRO report	See PRO report
4-MNO Portuguese market	-56%	See PRO report	See PRO report



Was the 31% increase in the average monthly price in the 4-to-3 consolidated UK mobile market solely attributable to the shift towards plans with more expensive monthly prices, depicted in the chart above; in 2023, the right tail of the probability distribution curve extended to ~€40, in 2024 to ~€45, and in 2025 and 2026 to ~€55?

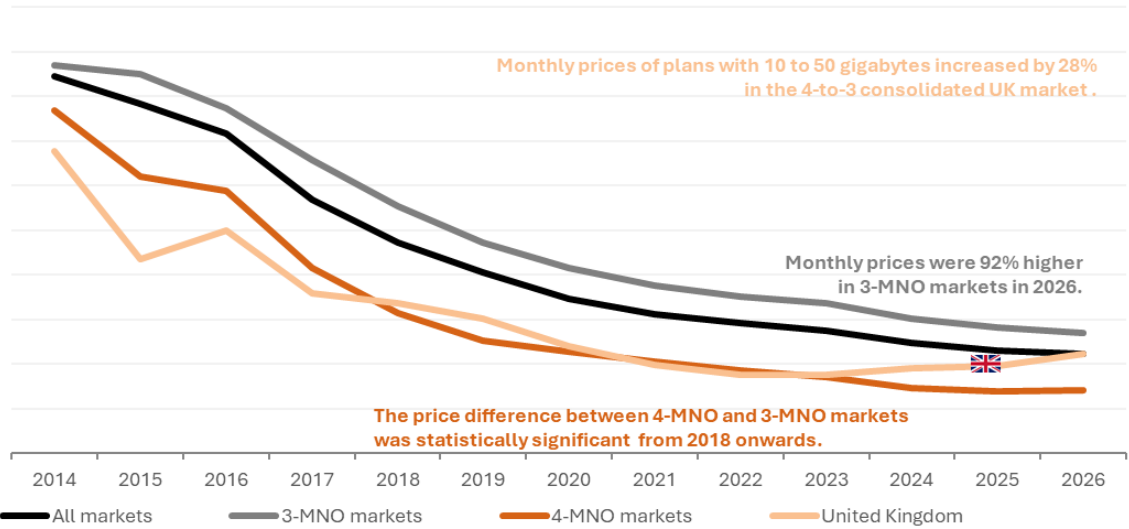
No, it was not. As seen in the charts below (full charts included in the PRO version of the report), average monthly prices rose by double-digit percentages across all but one plan categories.

Average monthly price of 5G & 4G & 3G plans with at least 1000 mins, 1 to 10 gigabytes and 5 Mbit/s download speed for HD video streaming - 2014 to 2026



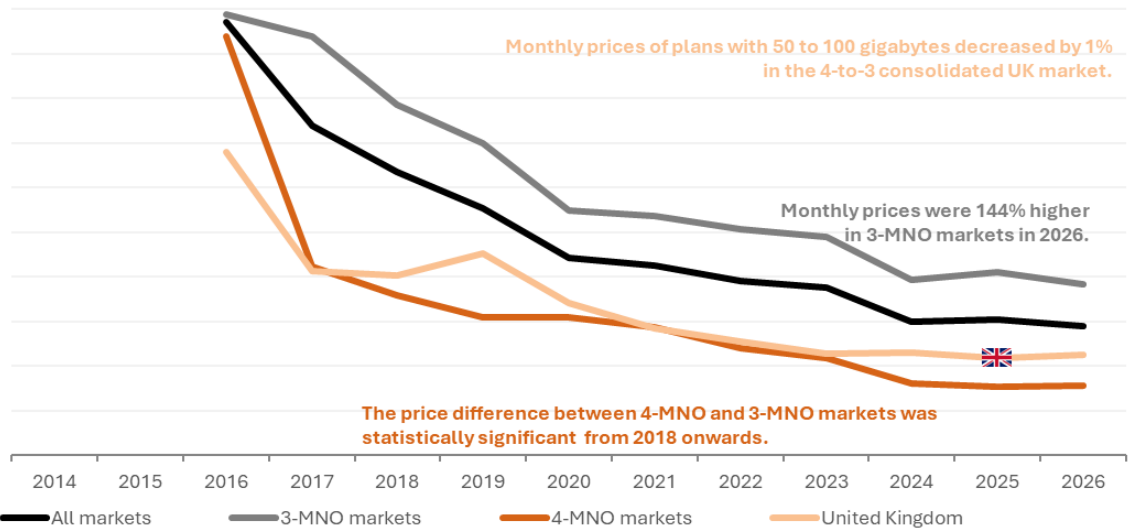
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Average monthly price of 5G & 4G & 3G plans with at least 1000 mins, 10 to 50 gigabytes and 5 Mbit/s download speed for HD video streaming - 2014 to 2026



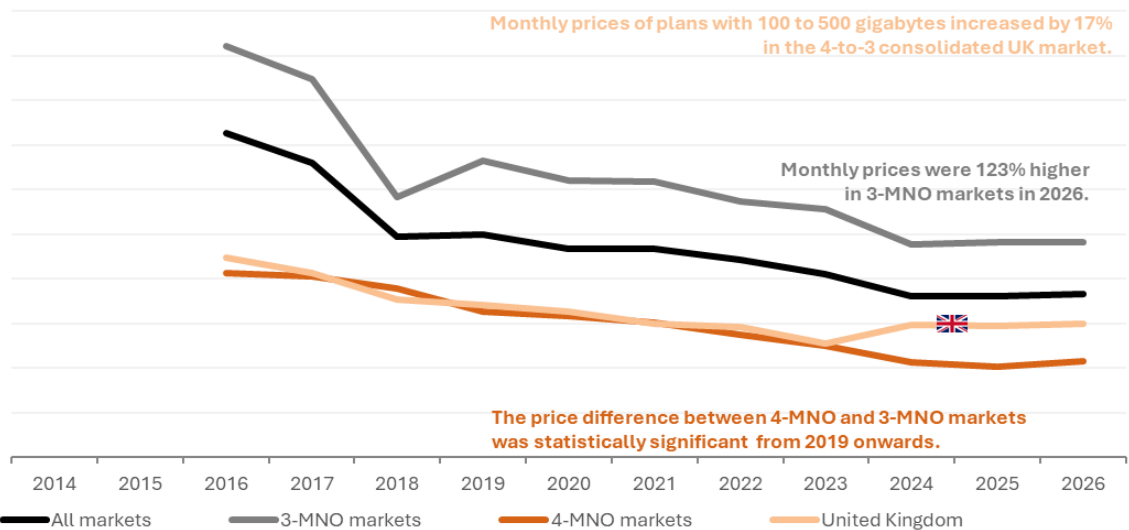
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Average monthly price of 5G & 4G & 3G plans with at least 1000 mins, 50 to 100 gigabytes and 5 Mbit/s download speed for HD video streaming - 2014 to 2026



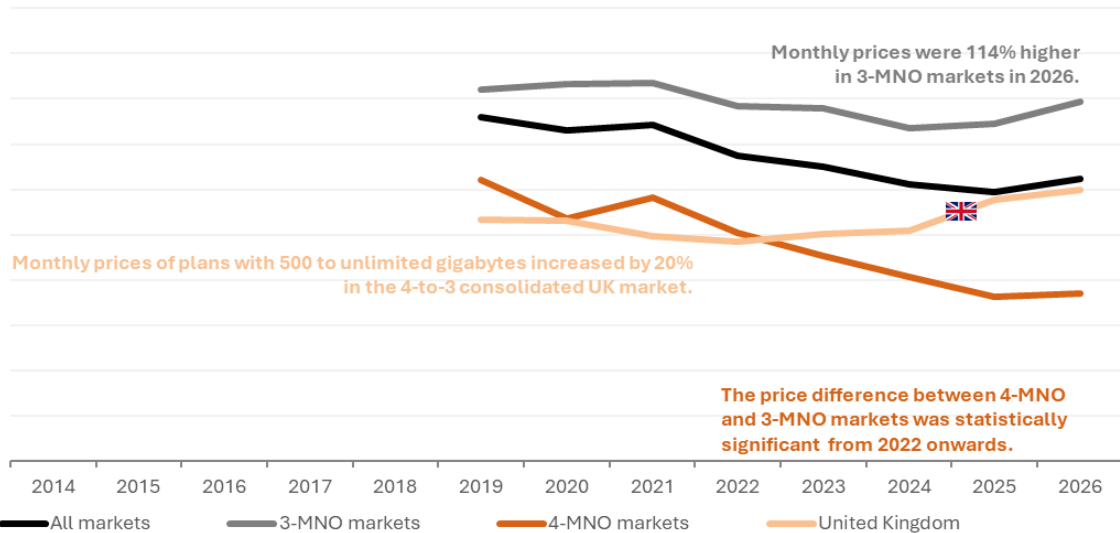
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Average monthly price of 5G & 4G & 3G plans with at least 1000 mins, 100 to 500 gigabytes and 5 Mbit/s download speed for HD video streaming - 2014 to 2026



The average prices across all markets (41 in 2014 increasing to 52 in 2026), 3-MNO and 4-MNO markets were estimated with a Linear Mixed-effects Model (LMM) in Jamovi. [rewheel.fi/research](http://rewheel.fi/research)

Average monthly price of 5G & 4G plans with at least 1000 mins, 500 to unlimited gigabytes and 5 Mbit/s DL speed for HD video streaming - 2014 to 2026



The average prices across all markets (41 in 2014 increasing to 52 in 2026), 3-MNO and 4-MNO markets were estimated with a Linear Mixed-effects Model (LMM) in Jamovi. [rewheel.fi/research](http://rewheel.fi/research)

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Vodafone and Three UK increased the monthly price of their Unlimited plans by 42% and 95%, respectively, thanks to CMA's and labour government's inexplicable approval of the 4-to-3 mobile merger. The post-merger (2023 to 2026) share of the price increases were 16% and 63%.

**18<sup>th</sup> Sept 2021 £26.25 Vodafone 28<sup>th</sup> Feb 2026 £37.25 (+42%)**

Unlimited Max (Speed: Fastest available) - Monthly £36 (Price increase to £37.80 on 1 April 2026)

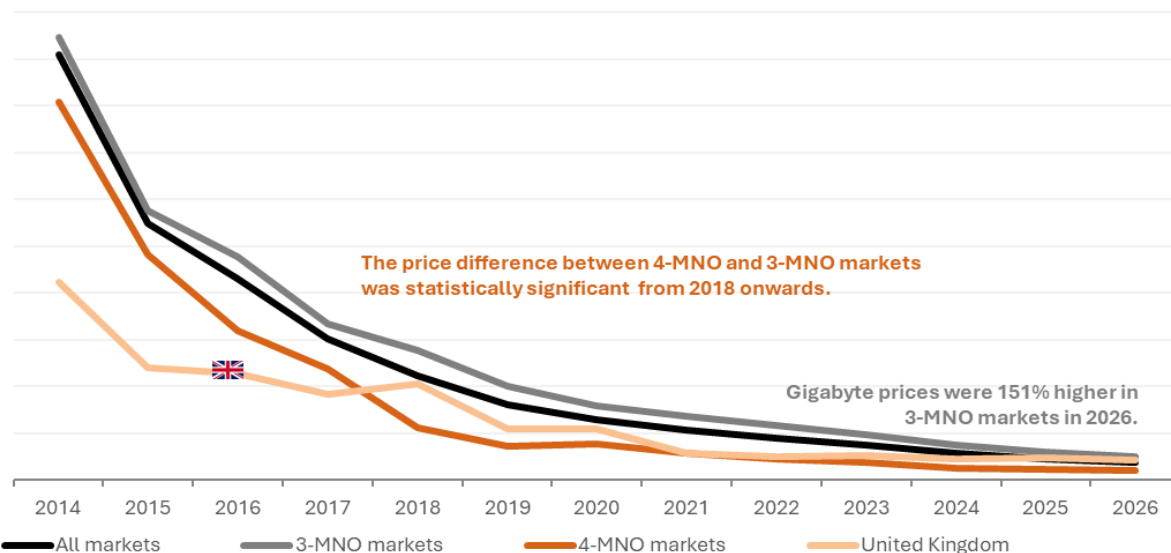
**3<sup>rd</sup> Oct 2019 £17.50 Three 28<sup>th</sup> Feb 2026 £34.15<sup>1</sup> (+95%)**

Unlimited data - Monthly £30 (Increasing to £36.30 from 1 Apr 27, £37.60 from 1 Apr 28)

<sup>1</sup>Three's Advanced plan included free World roaming while the Value plan includes free roaming only in Europe. Three's Complete plan which is even more expensive than the Value plan includes free World roaming.

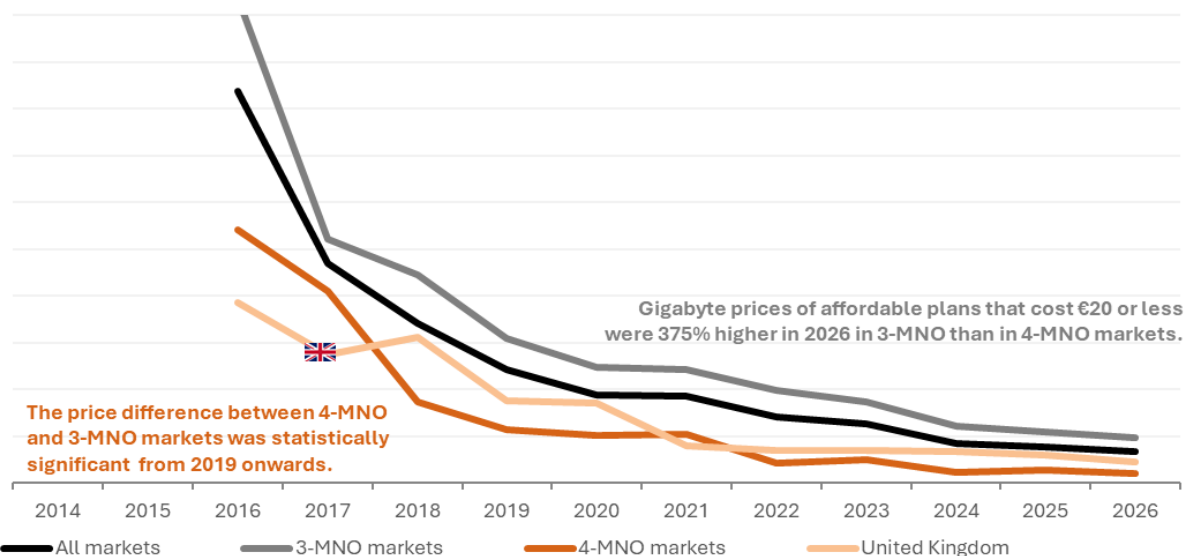
- Average mobile monthly prices of 5G & 4G plans continue to fall overall across the 52 EU & OECD markets tracked, albeit with a decreasing rate, while the average gigabytes included in plans continue to increase, leading to lower average gigabyte unit prices.
- The average gigabytes included in affordable plans that cost €20 or less were 170% higher in 4-MNO markets, hence the average gigabyte price of affordable plans that cost €20 or less were 375% higher in 3-MNO versus 4-MNO markets compared to 151% higher for all plans.

Average gigabyte price of 5G & 4G & 3G plans with at least 1000 mins and 0.5 Mbit/s (1 Mbit/s from 2024 onwards) download speed - 2014 to 2026



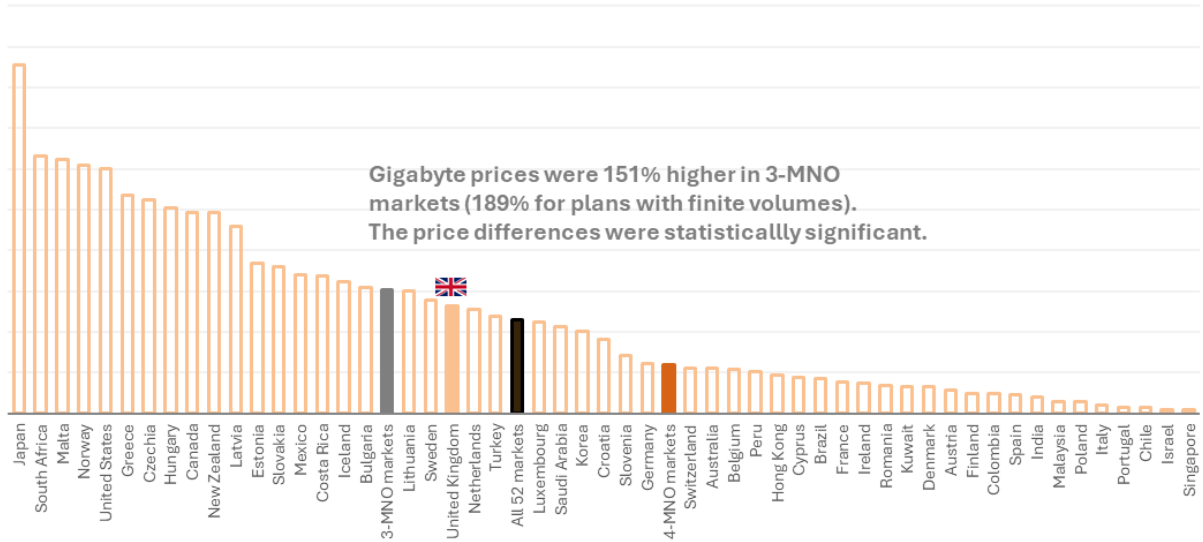
The average gigabyte prices across all markets (41 in 2014 increasing to 52 in 2026), 3-MNO and 4-MNO markets were estimated with a Linear Mixed-effects Model (LMM) in Jamovi. [rewheel.fi/research](https://rewheel.fi/research)

Average gigabyte price of affordable 5G & 4G & 3G plans that cost €20 or less with at least 1000 mins and 5 Mbit/s download speed for HD video streaming - 2014 to 2026



The average gigabyte prices across all markets (41 in 2014 increasing to 52 in 2026), 3-MNO and 4-MNO markets were estimated with a Linear Mixed-effects Model (LMM) in Jamovi. [rewheel.fi/research](https://rewheel.fi/research)

Average gigabyte price of 5G & 4G plans with at least 1000 mins and 1 Mbit/s download speed - 2026



Average gigabyte price (monthly retail price incl. VAT, taxes & fees divided by included gigabyte allowance) of all eligible tariff plans sold by MNO main brand, sub-brands and MVNOs. 3293 tariff plans included. The average prices across all 52 markets, 3-MNO and 4-MNO markets were estimated with a Linear Mixed-effects Model (LMM) in Jamovi.

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## Table of Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Context and methodology</b>	<b>9</b>
1.1	52 European, American, Asia Pacific, Middle Eastern and African countries included in the study	10
1.2	Mobile (wireless) voice-data plans tracked and analyzed in 2026	11
1.3	Detailed methodology	11
1.3.1	Mobile network operators (MNOs), network operator sub-brands and mobile virtual network operators (MVNOs)	11
1.3.2	Tariff numbers, collection methods and tariff eligibility rules	11
1.3.3	Notes regarding 3G plan reintroduction in the database	13
1.3.4	Notes regarding very high advertised versus typical download speeds	14
1.3.5	Notes regarding plans advertised as plans with unlimited data volume	14
1.3.6	Price metrics definitions – Monthly price, gigabyte allowance and gigabyte price (monthly price divided by gigabytes)	16
1.4	Statistical analysis overview	16
<b>2</b>	<b>Designation of mobile markets to 3-MNO or 4-MNO markets - 2014 to 2026</b>	<b>17</b>
2.1	Market transition events – Markets transitions from 3 to 4 MNOs and from 4 to 3 MNOs	20
2.2	Notes for other markets where no transition events are modeled	21
<b>3</b>	<b>The state of 5G &amp; 4G prices in 52 EU &amp; OECD markets in 2026</b>	<b>22</b>
3.1	Average monthly prices	22
3.1.1	All 5G & 4G plans	22
3.1.2	5G & 4G plans with 1 to 10 gigabytes and 5 Mbit/s download speed for HD video streaming	24
3.1.3	5G & 4G plans with 10 to 50 gigabytes and 5 Mbit/s download speed for HD video streaming	25
3.1.4	5G & 4G plans with 50 to 100 gigabytes and 5 Mbit/s download speed for HD video streaming	26
3.1.5	5G & 4G plans with 100 gigabytes and 5 Mbit/s download speed for HD video streaming	27
3.1.6	5G & 4G plans with 100 to 500 gigabytes and 5 Mbit/s download speed for HD video streaming	28
3.1.7	5G & 4G plans with 500 to unlimited gigabytes and 5 Mbit/s download speed for HD video streaming	29
3.2	Average gigabytes	30
3.2.1	All 5G & 4G plans	30
3.2.2	Affordable 5G & 4G plans that cost €20 or less with at least 5 Mbit/s download speed for HD video streaming	31
3.3	Average gigabyte unit prices – Plan’s monthly price divided by included gigabyte volume	32
3.3.1	All 5G & 4G plans	32
3.3.2	Affordable 5G & 4G plans that cost €20 or less with at least 5 Mbit/s download speed for HD video streaming	33
<b>4</b>	<b>Historic development of 5G &amp; 4G &amp; 3G prices</b>	<b>34</b>
4.1	Average monthly prices	34
4.1.1	All 5G & 4G & 3G plans	34
4.1.2	5G & 4G & 3G plans with 1 to 10 gigabytes and 5 Mbit/s download speed for HD video streaming	36
4.1.3	5G & 4G & 3G plans with 10 to 50 gigabytes and 5 Mbit/s download speed for HD video streaming	37
4.1.4	5G & 4G & 3G plans with 50 to 100 gigabytes and 5 Mbit/s download speed for HD video streaming	38
4.1.5	5G & 4G & 3G plans with 100 gigabytes and 5 Mbit/s download speed for HD video streaming	39
4.1.6	5G & 4G & 3G plans with 100 to 500 gigabytes and 5 Mbit/s download speed for HD video streaming	40
4.1.7	5G & 4G plans with 500 to unlimited gigabytes and 5 Mbit/s download speed for HD video streaming	41
4.2	Average included gigabytes	42
4.2.1	All 5G & 4G & 3G plans	42
4.2.2	Affordable 5G & 4G & 3G plans that cost €20 or less with at least 5 Mbit/s download speed for HD video streaming	43
4.3	Average gigabyte unit prices – Plan’s monthly price divided by included gigabyte volume	44
4.3.1	All 5G & 4G & 3G plans	44
4.3.2	Affordable 5G & 4G & 3G plans that cost €20 or less with at least 5 Mbit/s download speed for HD video streaming	45
<b>5</b>	<b>Post-merger price increases in the 4-to-3 consolidated UK mobile market</b>	<b>46</b>
5.1	The Vodafone / Three 4-to-3 mobile merger in the United Kingdom and CMA’s approval	46

5.2	Rewheel's critical views on CMA's inexplicable approval of the Vodafone / Three 4-to-3 mobile merger	47
5.3	Contrary to CMA's fictitious merger simulation the merger led to higher (not lower) gigabyte unit prices	50
5.4	Monthly prices increased by an average of 31% in the UK following the Vodafone / Three 4-to-3 mobile merger	52
5.5	The dubious consolidation economics of Frontier's Economics (rubber-stamped by CMA)	56
5.6	CMA's Chief Economic Adviser, after rubber-stamping Frontier's dubious merger analysis, left CMA and joined Frontier	58
<b>6</b>	<b>Mobile market dashboards</b>	<b>59</b>
6.1	AT – Austria	59
6.2	AT – Australia	60
6.3	BE – Belgium	61
6.4	BG – Bulgaria	62
6.5	BR – Brazil	63
6.6	CA – Canada	64
6.7	CH – Switzerland	65
6.8	CL – Chile	66
6.9	CO – Colombia	67
6.10	CR – Costa Rica	68
6.11	CY – Cyprus	69
6.12	CZ – Czechia	70
6.13	DE – Germany	71
6.14	DK – Denmark	72
6.15	EE – Estonia	73
6.16	GR – Greece	74
6.17	ES – Spain	75
6.18	FI – Finland	76
6.19	FR – France	77
6.20	HK – Hong Kong	78
6.21	HR – Croatia	79
6.22	HU – Hungary	80
6.23	IE – Ireland	81
6.24	IL – Israel	82
6.25	IN – India	83
6.26	IS – Iceland	84
6.27	IT – Italy	85
6.28	JP – Japan	86
6.29	KR – Korea	87
6.30	KW – Kuwait	88
6.31	LT – Lithuania	89
6.32	LU – Luxembourg	90
6.33	LV – Latvia	91
6.34	MT – Malta	92
6.35	MX – Mexico	93
6.36	MY – Malaysia	94
6.37	NL – Netherlands	95
6.38	NO – Norway	96
6.39	NZ – New Zealand	97
6.40	PE – Peru	98

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6.41	PL – Poland	99
6.42	PT – Portugal	100
6.43	RO – Romania	101
6.44	SA – Saudi Arabia	102
6.45	SE – Sweden	103
6.46	SG – Singapore	104
6.47	SI – Slovenia	105
6.48	SK – Slovakia	106
6.49	TR – Turkey	107
6.50	UK – United Kingdom	108
6.51	US – United States	109
6.52	ZA – South Africa	110
<b>About Rewheel</b>		<b>111</b>

## 1 Context and methodology

Rewheel has been tracking mobile prices since 2012. Rewheel's first international comparison study<sup>1</sup> of mobile prices was conducted in December 2012. It tracked mobile prices across the 27 countries that were members of the European Union at the time. The main finding of Rewheel's 2012 study, "*Research shows that users pay up to ten times more to use their smartphones in those Member States where there is no challenger to the big European operators*" was cited<sup>2</sup> by the former Vice President of the European Commission, Joaquin Almunia, in a speech dated the 28<sup>th</sup> of February 2013.

Rewheel's studies are the world's most comprehensive mobile (wireless) voice-data plan price comparison studies. Rewheel's research aims to objectively and accurately measure the price differences across mobile and broadband markets and identify and quantify the competition factors (e.g., 4 versus 3 mobile network operators) that underpin the massive price differences.

In April 2025, Rewheel published<sup>3</sup> the 2025 release of the 5G & 4G price comparison series titled "*The state of 5G & 4G pricing in 50 EU&OECD mobile markets - 1H2025*" with mobile voice-data plan prices from 50 European, American, Asia Pacific, Middle Eastern and African countries.

Herein, Rewheel presents the latest, 2026, 5G & 4G price comparison study. The 2026 study is a 13-year cross-country econometric study of average mobile monthly and gigabyte prices, price differences between 3-MNO and 4-MNO markets, historic price trends, and statistical analysis using Linear Mixed-effects Models (LMM).

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<sup>1</sup><https://rewheel.fi/research>

<sup>2</sup>[https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech\\_13\\_168](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_13_168)

<sup>3</sup><https://rewheel.fi/research>

## 1.1 52 European, American, Asia Pacific, Middle Eastern and African countries included in the study

In 2026, Rewheel tracked and analyzed 5G & 4G voice-data plan prices across 52 European, American, Asia Pacific, Middle Eastern, and African countries. In addition to tracking the latest 2026 mobile prices of the 50 European, American, Asia Pacific, Middle Eastern, and African countries included in the 2025 study, in 2026, Rewheel tracked two new countries: the 4-MNO Hong Kong market and the 3-MNO Costa Rica (OECD member) market.

The 52 countries included in the comparison are listed in the table below. The 52 countries are listed alphabetically following the two-letter country code abbreviation. The table also contains information regarding the European Union (EU 27 countries) country membership and/or the Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation country membership (OECD 37 countries).

EU	OECD	Code	Country Name
Yes	Yes	AT	Austria
No	Yes	AU	Australia
Yes	Yes	BE	Belgium
Yes	No	BG	Bulgaria
No	No	BR	Brazil
No	Yes	CA	Canada
No	Yes	CH	Switzerland
No	Yes	CL	Chile
No	Yes	CO	Colombia
No	Yes	CR	Costa Rica
Yes	No	CY	Cyprus
Yes	Yes	CZ	Czechia
Yes	Yes	DE	Germany
Yes	Yes	DK	Denmark
Yes	Yes	EE	Estonia
Yes	Yes	EL	Greece
Yes	Yes	ES	Spain
Yes	Yes	FI	Finland
Yes	Yes	FR	France
No	No	HK	Hong Kong
Yes	No	HR	Croatia
Yes	Yes	HU	Hungary
Yes	Yes	IE	Ireland
No	Yes	IL	Israel
No	No	IN	India
No	Yes	IS	Iceland
Yes	Yes	IT	Italy
No	Yes	JP	Japan
No	Yes	KR	Korea
No	No	KW	Kuwait
Yes	No	LT	Lithuania
Yes	Yes	LU	Luxembourg
Yes	Yes	LV	Latvia
Yes	No	MT	Malta
No	Yes	MX	Mexico
No	No	MY	Malaysia
Yes	Yes	NL	Netherlands
No	Yes	NO	Norway
No	Yes	NZ	New Zealand
No	No	PE	Peru
Yes	Yes	PL	Poland
Yes	Yes	PT	Portugal
Yes	No	RO	Romania
No	No	SA	Saudi Arabia
Yes	Yes	SE	Sweden
No	No	SG	Singapore
Yes	Yes	SI	Slovenia
Yes	Yes	SK	Slovakia
No	Yes	TR	Turkey
No	Yes	UK	United Kingdom
No	Yes	US	United States
No	No	ZA	South Africa

## 1.2 Mobile (wireless) voice-data plans tracked and analyzed in 2026

The following 5G & 4G voice-data plans were deemed eligible and included in the 2026 study: 5G plans (with a 4G fallback) having at least 1000 national minutes, 1 gigabyte of data volume, and 1 Mbit/s download speed and 4G plans having at least 1000 national minutes, 1 gigabyte of data volume, and 1 Mbit/s download speed.

## 1.3 Detailed methodology

Rewheel's comparison methodology was designed from the onset to measure the price of mobile data connectivity both in plans that include voice and data connectivity and as well in data-only plans with full or restricted (e.g., fixed wireless access) mobility. Hence, by tracking the price of plans that include practically unlimited voice connectivity (i.e., 1000 or more national minutes), Rewheel could compare directly the price for mobile data connectivity and track the historic price development. Back in 2014, smartphone plans that included practically unlimited minutes/SMS were the de facto monthly rolling plans in the majority of the EU28 & OECD countries.

In 2026, in almost all 52 European, American, Asia Pacific, and Middle East countries (Costa Rica and South Africa were the two notable exceptions), 5G & 4G voice-data plans that included practically unlimited national minutes were sold as entry-level monthly rolling plans.

### 1.3.1 Mobile network operators (MNOs), network operator sub-brands and mobile virtual network operators (MVNOs)

In 2026, Rewheel tracked prices from 178 mobile network operators (MNOs), 178 network operator main brands, 147 network operator sub-brands, and 183 virtual network operators (VNOs), a total of 509 providers. The MNOs, MNO main brands, sub-brands, and MVNOs that were present across the 52 markets and tracked during 2026 are listed in section 6 of the full report.

### 1.3.2 Tariff numbers, collection methods and tariff eligibility rules

The 2026 study contains 3293 5G & 4G voice-data plan tariffs. The entire database dating back to 2014 includes over thirty thousand 5G, 4G, and 3G voice-data tariff plans. Tariffs were collected from the service providers' websites during January and February 2026. Screenshots from every single service provider tariff plan that was used in the comparative analysis were archived.

Eligible 5G & 4G voice-data plans in 2026 were 5G or 4G LTE plans with at least 1000 national minutes to all domestic networks, 1 gigabyte of included data volume, and 1 Mbit/s offered download speed. 5G or 4G LTE plans with a download speed cap lower than 1 Mbit/s were not eligible. 5G or 4G LTE plans where the speed was throttled below 1 Mbit/s after the depletion of a high-speed volume were eligible but treated as tariffs with finite data volume. Please note that from 2024, the 5G & 4G voice-data plan minimum required speed eligibility threshold was increased from 0.5 Mbit/s (minimum required speed for 2014-2023) to 1 Mbit/s.

Eligible plans were monthly rolling plans (both postpaid and prepaid plans with automatic 28-, 30-, or 31-day renewal cycles or monthly renewal cycles) that were available to all consumers. Plans that were sold at lower prices, sold with higher gigabyte allowances, or sold with higher speeds to selected consumers such as youth, seniors, soldiers, additional family members, customers with PayPal accounts, etc., or plans bundled with other services (e.g., fixed broadband service, mobile voice service, mobile broadband service, TV services, etc.) were not eligible.

All SIM-only tariff plans and, on rare occasions, tariff plans with handset subsidies that included higher gigabyte volume allowance than the maximum possible sold in SIM-only tariff plans were logged in the database. Tariff plans with higher prices bundled with entertainment and premium content that did not offer higher domestic or international roaming data volumes or speeds than other lower-priced plans were excluded.

The following parameters have been collected for each tariff: the date and time of collection, the country, the operator name, the service provider name, the service provider brand type (operator main or sub-brand or VNO), the price in local currency, the included data volume allowance, the included minute/SMS allowances for 5G & 4G voice-data plans, the offered peak download

speed of data, the plan technology (5G or 4G for voice-data plans), the tariff name together with any applicable options or subsidies and finally the URL of the operator.

All commercial promotions available at the time of collection were considered (e.g., 2 months free if purchased online or 10% off if purchased before a certain date). All discounts were calculated for a minimum period of 12 months or for the specified contract period if it was longer than 12 months. If a tariff was cheaper with a longer contract duration, the lowest available price (e.g., 10% off with a 24-month contract) was logged in the database.

The tariff monthly fee does not include one-off fees (activation, porting, installation, service, etc.). Such fees, with very few exceptions, do not significantly increase the monthly tariff fee for the duration of the contract or when they are applied to a 12-month period in monthly rolling tariffs.

The database includes off-the-shelf tariffs (e.g., RED 2 Mbit/s, RED 10 Mbit/s, RED MAX Mbit/s), as well as, on rare occasions, data volume or speed add-ons that increase the monthly data volume allowance or the download speed. Only monthly rolling data volume or speed add-ons were eligible add-ons. One-time-use add-ons that expired at the end of the billing cycle were excluded. Promotions that temporarily increased the volume allowance speed or provided access to 5G were considered only if they were applicable for the entire contract duration or, in the case of monthly rolling contracts, for a minimum of 12 months.

No Purchase Power Parity (PPP) operation has been performed on the raw tariff plan prices. Prices in EUR are the retail prices (VAT and other applicable taxes and fees included where available) found on the service provider websites. Prices in other national currencies have been converted to EUR by using market exchange rates (displayed by Google on the day of collection).

Please note that in each release, historic prices in non-euro countries are converted to euros using the latest exchange rate (i.e., the exchange rate logged in the latest release). Hence, historic prices may vary from release to release. For example, the USD to EUR exchange rate has fluctuated from 0.74 to 0.96 during the last 13 years. In 2026, historic US prices (i.e., 2014 to 2025 prices) were converted to EUR using a flat 0.85 exchange rate.

Please note that the Bulgarian lev (BGN) was pegged to the euro before Bulgaria formally adopted the euro in 2026, while the Danish krone (DKK) is semi-pegged to the euro with a fluctuation band of +/- 2.25%. Herein, we have historically considered the Danish krone to have a fixed exchange rate with the euro of 0.13. The Romanian leu (RON) is scheduled to be replaced by the euro in 2026. In light of that, Romanian operators and service providers have been offering their services by displaying the retail prices in euros.

EU	OECD	Code	Country Name	1H26
Yes	Yes	AT	Austria	1.0000
No	Yes	AU	Australia	0.6000
Yes	Yes	BE	Belgium	1.0000
Yes	No	BG	Bulgaria	1.0000
No	No	BR	Brazil	0.1600
No	Yes	CA	Canada	0.6200
No	Yes	CH	Switzerland	1.1000
No	Yes	CL	Chile	0.0010
No	Yes	CO	Colombia	0.0002
No	Yes	CR	Costa Rica	0.0017
Yes	No	CY	Cyprus	1.0000
Yes	Yes	CZ	Czechia	0.0410
Yes	Yes	DE	Germany	1.0000
Yes	Yes	DK	Denmark	0.1300
Yes	Yes	EE	Estonia	1.0000
Yes	Yes	EL	Greece	1.0000
Yes	Yes	ES	Spain	1.0000
Yes	Yes	FI	Finland	1.0000
Yes	Yes	FR	France	1.0000
No	No	HK	Hong Kong	0.1100
Yes	No	HR	Croatia	1.0000
Yes	Yes	HU	Hungary	0.0026
Yes	Yes	IE	Ireland	1.0000
No	Yes	IL	Israel	0.2700
No	No	IN	India	0.0093
No	Yes	IS	Iceland	0.0069
Yes	Yes	IT	Italy	1.0000
No	Yes	JP	Japan	0.0055
No	Yes	KR	Korea	0.0006
No	No	KW	Kuwait	2.7500
Yes	No	LT	Lithuania	1.0000
Yes	Yes	LU	Luxembourg	1.0000
Yes	Yes	LV	Latvia	1.0000
Yes	No	MT	Malta	1.0000
No	Yes	MX	Mexico	0.0490
No	No	MY	Malaysia	0.2200
Yes	Yes	NL	Netherlands	1.0000
No	Yes	NO	Norway	0.0890
No	Yes	NZ	New Zealand	0.5100
No	No	PE	Peru	0.2500
Yes	Yes	PL	Poland	0.2400
Yes	Yes	PT	Portugal	1.0000
Yes	No	RO	Romania	1.0000
No	No	SA	Saudi Arabia	0.2200
Yes	Yes	SE	Sweden	0.0950
No	No	SG	Singapore	0.6700
Yes	Yes	SI	Slovenia	1.0000
Yes	Yes	SK	Slovakia	1.0000
No	Yes	TR	Turkey	0.0190
No	Yes	UK	United Kingdom	1.1400
No	Yes	US	United States	0.8500
No	No	ZA	South Africa	0.0530

### 1.3.3 Notes regarding 3G plan reintroduction in the database

When Rewheel started to systematically collect mobile prices in 2014 in many of the original 41 EU & OECD markets that were included in the comparison, operators were selling both 4G and 3G plans. While by 2014 most markets had already transitioned to 4G and most, but not necessarily all, mobile network operators operating in those markets had commercially launched 4G services, there were still a handful of markets where operators sold only 3G plans. Melita, the no. 3 MNO in Malta, was the last operator among the group of the 41 EU & OECD markets that Rewheel started to track in 2014 to launch 4G services in 2018, just a year shy of the introduction of 5G in 2019. From 2015 onwards, Rewheel's price comparison studies focused exclusively on 4G plans. 3G plans were excluded from the comparison even though they were still collected and archived.

However, given that 4G was positioned in many markets and by many operators as a premium service that commanded high prices, the exclusion of 3G plans made those few markets appear more expensive in the early years, since cheaper 3G plans were not included. Historical overall market price level records, irrespective of the type of advanced technology of the era (3G vs. 4G in 2014 to 2018 and 4G vs. 5G in 2019 to 2026), are relevant for the observed divergence of price levels between markets and in particular between 3-MNO and 4-MNO markets.

For the reasons detailed above, Rewheel decided to retroactively introduce, starting in this 2026 release, 3G plans in the database in accordance with the historic eligibility rules (at least 1000 national minutes and 0.5 Mbit/s download speed). Please note that the reintroduction of 3G plans has lowered the historic (2014 to 2018) market prices for some price metrics, such as the average monthly price of all eligible plans for the markets where 3G plans were retroactively introduced.

### 1.3.4 Notes regarding very high advertised versus typical download speeds

Please note that starting from 2025 Rewheel applied retroactively a change in the way the tariff plan speed is logged to all previous releases. While from 2014 to 2023 the mobile network operator maximum advertised or notified speed was logged as the tariff's offered peak download speed for all tariffs where the service providers did not specify the speed from 2024 onwards if the service provider did not sell tariffs tiered on speed (e.g., 10 Mbit/s for €10, 100 Mbit/s for €20 and 250 Mbit/s for €30) or did not state clearly the typical download peak speed offered 50 Mbit/s was logged as typical 4G peak tariff download speed and 100 Mbit/s was logged as typical 5G peak tariff download speed.

The new speed rule has been applied across all releases (2014-2026). Please note that for tariffs where the service provider restricted the peak download speed either for the entire data volume or after the depletion of a high-speed volume (e.g. 100 gigabytes) to a lower speed (e.g., 1 Mbit/s) both the unrestricted and restricted speeds were logged in the database.

Following the same principle, when 3G plans were reintroduced in the database, they were logged with a maximum download speed of 5 Mbit/s irrespective of whether those plans were advertised with higher speeds such as 7.1, 14.2, or 42 Mbit/s. If 3G plans were sold with peak advertised speeds that were lower than 5 Mbit/s but, in any case, higher than 0.5 Mbit/s (as eligibility rules dictate), they were logged with that lower speed (e.g., 4 Mbit/s).

### 1.3.5 Notes regarding plans advertised as plans with unlimited data volume

In accordance with Rewheel's rules, unlimited data volume plans were plans with no specified on-device finite gigabyte hard volume or fair usage policy limit for a given offered speed. Plans that allowed unlimited on-device data volume but either completely restricted hotspot functionality or limited the allowed data volume over hotspot functionality to a finite volume were nevertheless considered as unlimited data volume plans.

Plans where the operators (e.g., Korean operators) included high speed for a specified finite gigabyte volume and lower speed (e.g., 1, 3, 5, or 10 Mbit/s) for an unlimited data volume that kicks in after the depletion of the high-speed volume were treated as two separate tariffs: a tariff with a finite data volume with high speed and a tariff with an unlimited data volume with lower (i.e., the throttled) speed.

Plans where the operators (e.g., US operators) reserved the right to de-prioritize the traffic and throttled the speed at unspecified rates after a specified finite data volume was depleted (e.g., 50 gigabytes) were treated as a single tariff with a finite data volume with high speeds.

Plans with unlimited data volume were video streamed at a specified lower speed (e.g., US operator standard definition 480p 1.5 Mbit/s), and where the consumers could not turn off this feature, they were logged as tariffs with unlimited data volume at the video-specified streaming lower speed (i.e., 1.5 Mbit/s).

While European operators do include mobile hotspot functionality in voice-data plans at no extra cost for the entire finite or unlimited data volume, obliged by the EU net neutrality rules<sup>4</sup>, many non-EU operators (e.g., US or Korean operators) block altogether this functionality in some plans, include a smaller data volume for hotspot/tethering than the on-device data volume, or charge additional fees for enabling the WiFi hotspot functionality for finite data volumes. Hence, the like-for-like comparison of mobile voice-data plan prices between EU and non-EU operators if WiFi hotspot functionality were to be included would yield higher prices for non-EU operators that engage in such practices.

Historically, Rewheel assigned finite volumes to plans designated as unlimited volume plans. The finite volumes assigned were different in each release and were determined by the maximum named finite volume sold by any of the operators across all the

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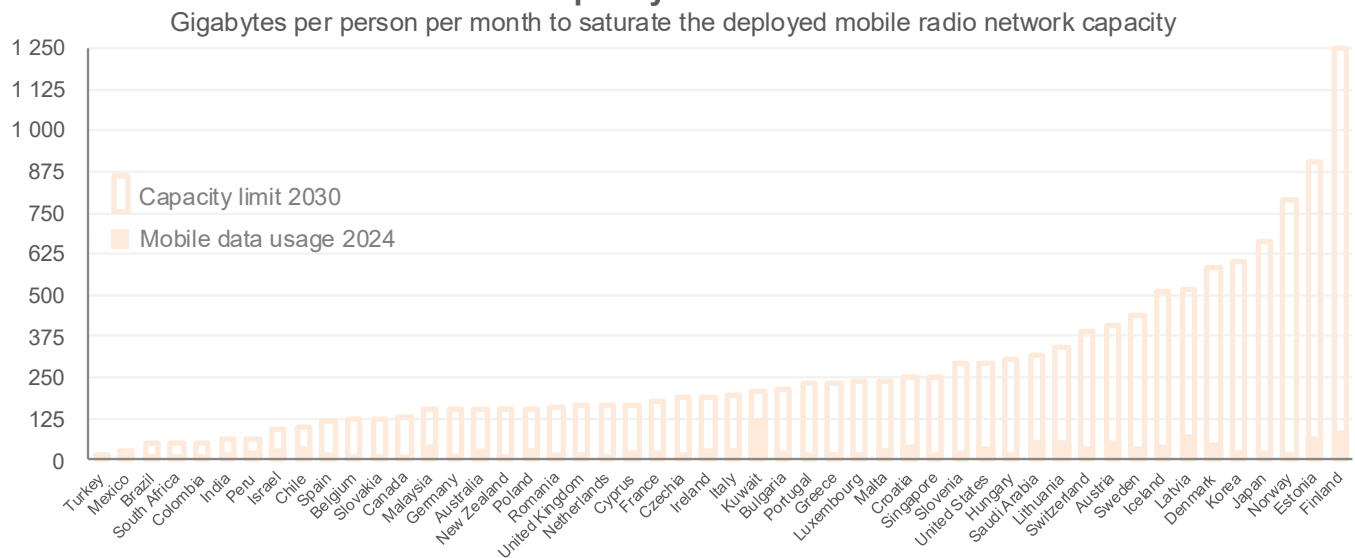
<sup>4</sup>[https://bereg.europa.eu/eng/document\\_register/subject\\_matter/bereg/download/0/6160-bereg-guidelines-on-the-implementation-b\\_0.pdf](https://bereg.europa.eu/eng/document_register/subject_matter/bereg/download/0/6160-bereg-guidelines-on-the-implementation-b_0.pdf)

markets that were included in a particular release. For example, the last few years plans designated as unlimited data volume plans were assigned the finite volume of 10000 gigabytes (10 terabytes) because this was the maximum named finite volume.

Starting in this 2026 release, the finite assigned volumes have been retroactively adjusted to reflect market practices and technology limitations. During the 4G era, from 2014 to 2018, all plans designated as plans with unlimited data volume were assigned the finite volume of 100 gigabytes. The main reason for this change is the fact very few plans were sold during the 4G era with finite named gigabyte volumes that exceeded 100 gigabytes. For reference, in 2014 no plan had a finite named volume that exceeded 100 gigabytes; in 2015 just one plan out of ~1700 plans had a finite named volume that exceeded 100 gigabytes; in 2016 just six plans out of ~2000 plans had finite named volumes that exceeded 100 gigabytes; in 2017 just nine plans out of ~2000 plans had finite named volumes that exceeded 100 gigabytes; and in 2018 just twenty-six out of ~2000 plans had finite named volumes that exceeded 100 gigabytes.

During the 5G era, from 2019 onwards, all plans designated as plans with unlimited data volume were assigned a finite volume of 1000 gigabytes. Following similar logic, for reference, in 2021 just fifteen plans out of ~3600 plans had finite named volumes that exceeded 1000 gigabytes. Moreover, as Rewheel has shown in its research study<sup>5</sup> titled “Mobile data usage in 2024, capacity limits 2024-2030, and many other competitiveness metrics for 173 mobile network operators present across 50 EU & OECD mobile markets” Finland is the only mobile market where the radio capacity limit is higher than 1000 gigabytes (1250 gigabytes per person per month), as seen in the chart below.

### Capacity limit - 2030



The mobile market capacity limit is the sum of the capacity limits of the mobile networks present in the market. [research.rewheel.fi](https://research.rewheel.fi) ©

In addition to the technology capacity limitation (i.e., ~1000 gigabytes for 5G and ~100 gigabytes for 4G), there are also widespread commercial restrictions applied to plans marketed as plans with unlimited data volume by operators in 3-MNO markets such as the United States, South Korea, the Netherlands, and New Zealand.

In the United States, for example, most plans marketed as plans with unlimited data volume limit the mobile hotspot data volume to anything between 5 and 100 gigabytes and/or do not include HD video streaming functionality without an add-on or an upgrade to a more expensive plan and/or are deprioritized (speed is throttled to non-HD video-capable streaming speeds of <5 Mbit/s during times of radio cell congestion).

<sup>5</sup><https://research.rewheel.fi>

Similarly, in South Korea, operators limit the mobile hotspot data volume of plans marketed as unlimited data volume plans to finite volumes ranging between 5 and 100 gigabytes. In the Netherlands and a few other 3-MNO markets, operators cap the daily volume of unlimited data volume plans to anything between 2 and 20 gigabytes per day. Thereafter, consumers must reactivate additional data volumes of 2 to 20 gigabytes by sending a free SMS. This practice, in essence, limits the unlimited data volume to around 1000 gigabytes per month. How many times a day can a consumer send an SMS to extend their data volume by 2 additional gigabytes?

Operators in the 3-MNO New Zealand market, similarly to operators in the United States, cap the mobile hotspot data volumes on most unlimited data volume plans and/or do not include HD video streaming functionality on those plans.

For reference, a consumer on an unlimited data volume plan that streams on-device 720p HD video at 5 Mbit/s speed non-stop for sixteen hours every day, when not sleeping, will generate approximately 1080 gigabytes during a month.

### 1.3.6 Price metrics definitions – Monthly price, gigabyte allowance and gigabyte price (monthly price divided by gigabytes)

In previous releases, Rewheel used the median value as a measure of a market or group of markets (e.g., EU-27, 3-MNO, or 4-MNO markets) overall monthly price level, gigabyte allowance, and gigabyte price level (monthly price divided by the included gigabyte allowance). Starting from this 2026 release, the monthly price, gigabyte allowance, and gigabyte price metrics will be reported as average (mean) rather than median values.

With the introduction of 4G, prices diverged, and a number of operators, e.g., in the United States, Germany, Greece, South Africa, etc., launched plans with very high monthly fees that ranged from ~€200 to ~€700. Plans with very high monthly fees and/or unlimited gigabytes skewed the average (mean) values significantly, often distorting the market's overall price level. The combined effect of falling monthly prices (the average monthly price across all markets tracked by Rewheel has roughly halved, falling from €43.80 in 2014 to €22.80 in 2026) and of the new substantially lower finite volumes assigned to plans sold with unlimited data volumes (100 gigabytes during the 2014 to 2018 4G era and 1000 gigabytes from 2019 onwards during the 5G era) significantly attenuated the skewing average price effect caused by a handful of premium plans sold at very high prices (price outliers) and the skewing average gigabyte allowance effect caused by plans that include unlimited data volumes (data volume outliers).

## 1.4 Statistical analysis overview

In this 2026 release, the monthly price, gigabyte allowance, and gigabyte price across all markets, 3-MNO markets, and 4-MNO markets (41 markets in 2014 to 2019, 45 markets in 2020, 48 markets in 2021 to 2022, 49 markets in 2023, 50 markets in 2024 to 2025, and 52 markets in 2026) were estimated using Linear Mixed-effects Models (LLM) in the Jamovi 2.6.44 statistical software package. In previous releases, the monthly price, gigabyte allowance, and gigabyte price across all markets, 3-MNO markets, and 4-MNO markets were pool median values (median of all plans included in the group) or median of market medians (median value among the median value of all markets included in the group).

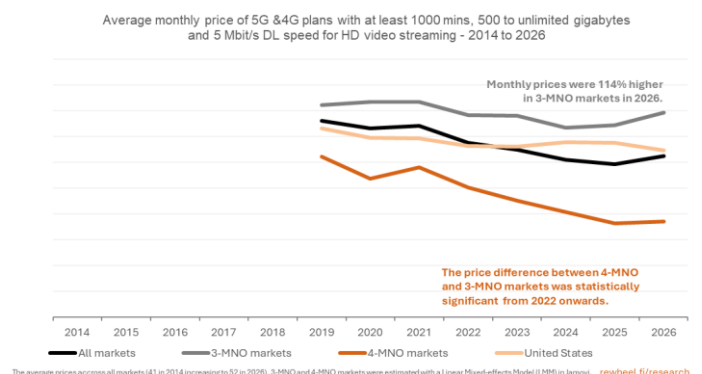
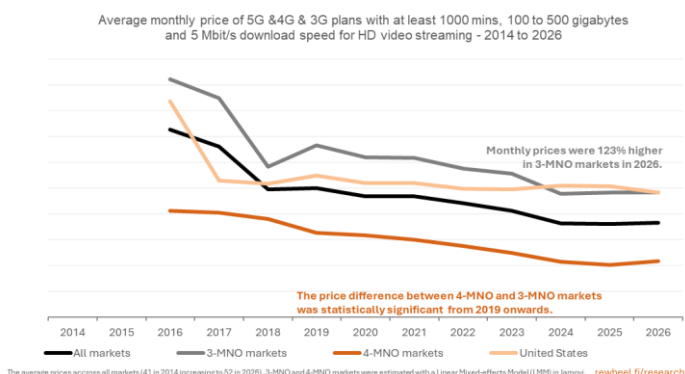
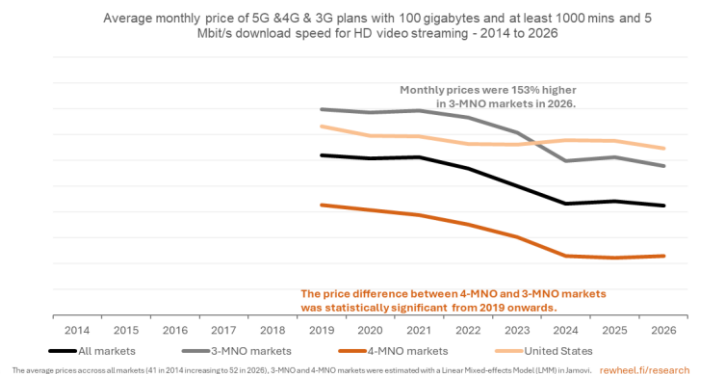
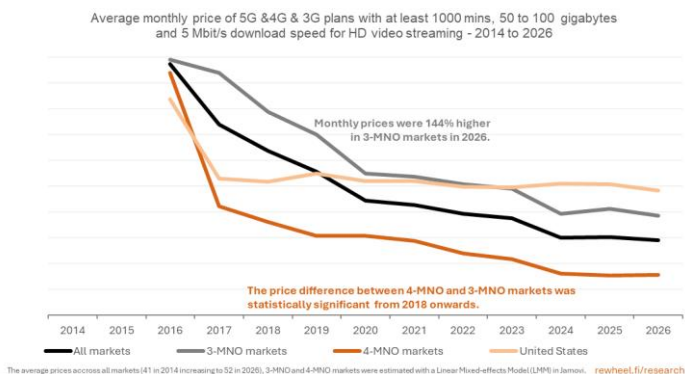
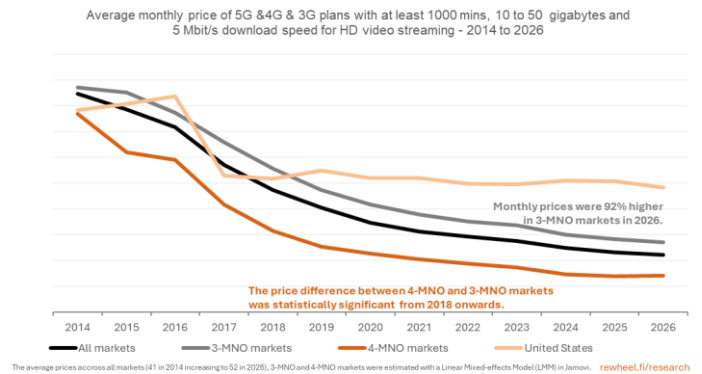
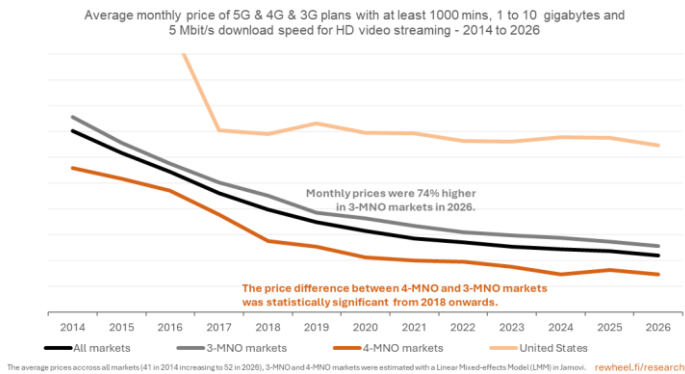
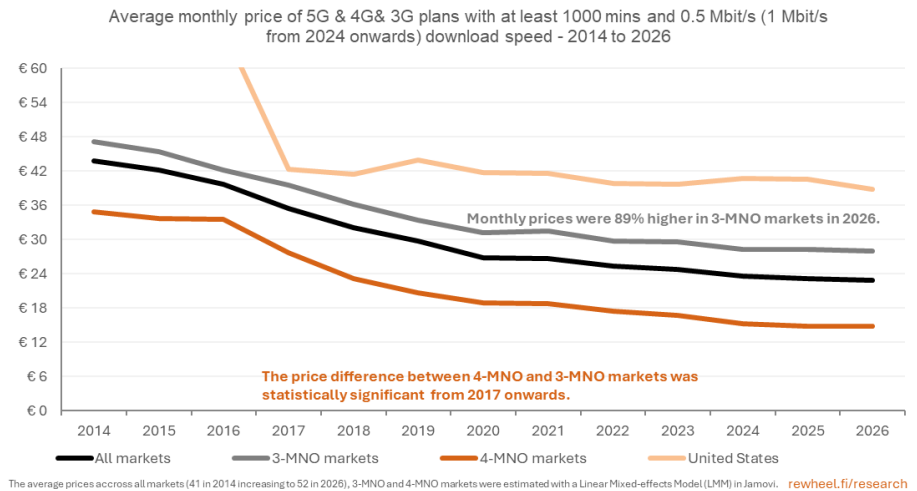
Rewheel's updated methodology not only improves the accuracy of price difference estimations in 3-MNO and 4-MNO markets but also allows for rigorous statistical significance testing. By employing Linear Mixed-effects Models, the gold standard for observations nested at the market level, the new methodology accounts for both random effects and the fixed effect of a fourth MNO's presence.

As indicated in the highlights section of the public report, the price differences between the 3-MNO and 4-MNO markets were statistically significant in 2026 and as well during the 5G era (2019 onwards). The statistical significance during the 4G era (2014 to 2018) varied depending on the relevance of the metric for the given period. For instance, the difference in the monthly price of plans with 100 to 500 gigabytes between 3-MNO and 4-MNO markets became statistically significant in 2019 for the first time, simply because, as indicated earlier, there were very few plans with such large gigabyte allowances sold during the 4G era (2014 to 2018).

US – United States

The PRO version of the report includes selected charts that depict the historic development of monthly prices in up to ten selected 52 EU & OECD markets. For full access to the historic development of monthly and gigabyte prices across all 52 EU & OECD markets, the PRO version of the spreadsheet can be licensed upon request.

United States no.	MNOs no.	Mobile service providers no.
US 1	Verizon-US 1	Verizon-US 1
2	ATT-US 2	Visible-US 2
3	T-Mobile-US 3	TotalWireless-US 3
4		Straighttalk-US 4
5		Simplemobile-US 5
6		USmobile-US 6
7		Tingmobile-US 7
8		MobileX-US 8
9		RedPocket-US 9
10	ATT-US 10	Cricket-US 11
11		Boostmobile-US 12
12		genmobile-US 13
13		PureTalkUSA-US 14
14		H2Owireless-US 15
15		ConsumerCellular-US 16
16		T-Mobile-US 17
17		Metro-US 18
18		Mintmobile-US 19
19		Ultramobile-US 20
20		GoogleFi-US 21
21		Tello-US 22
22		Lycamobile-US 23
23		Optimum-US 24
24		



About Rewheel

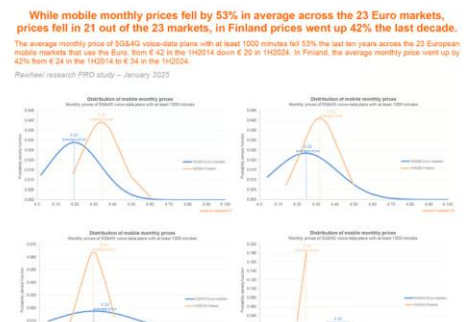
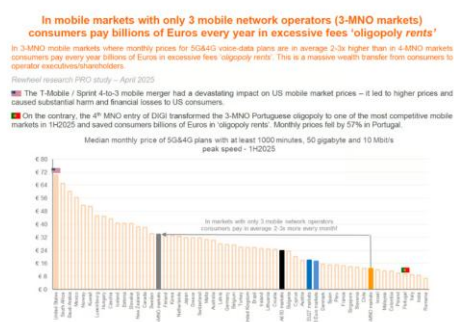
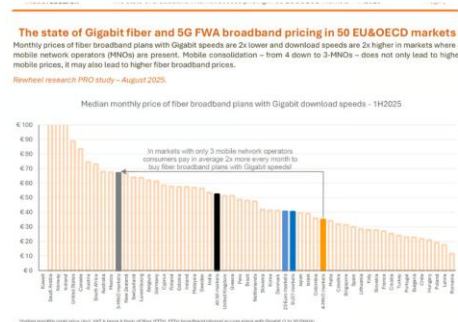
Founded in 2009 and incorporated in Finland, Rewheel is a privately owned independent telecom research & advisory firm. Rewheel's clients are mobile network operators, telco groups, MVNO groups, competition authorities, telecom sector regulators, governments, global internet firms, mobile data-centric start-ups, PE and VC investors.

Rewheel has advised clients in the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, Ireland, Switzerland, Finland, Sweden, Belgium, Greece, Poland, Slovenia, Hungary, Russia and Romania in mobile data pricing strategies, mobile network economics, consolidation impact, mobile mergers, effective remedies, market modelling, new market entries, network sharing, spectrum valuations, network operator marginal data cost, MVNO economics and 4th mobile network operator (MNO) business cases.

Antonios Drossos, Rewheel's co-founder and managing partner, is a competition and network economics expert with over 25 years of mobile (wireless) industry and 15 years of independent research and advisory experience.

Rewheel's research findings and Antonios Drossos expert opinions have been cited/quoted by the OECD Economic Surveys, The Economist, The Financial Times, The New York Times, Reuters, Bloomberg, The Wall Street Journal and publicly referenced by the UK telecoms regulator Ofcom, BIPT, Vodafone, Telefonica, Tele2, 1&1, Elisa, DNA, GSMA, VPs of the EU Commission responsible for Competition, MEPs, IEEE, ITU and many others.

Recent Rewheel research PRO-reports



The state of Gigabit fiber & 5G FWA broadband pricing in 50 EU&OECD markets - 1H2025

Monthly prices of fiber broadband plans with Gigabit speeds are 2x lower and download speeds are 2x higher in markets where 4 mobile network operators (MNOs) are present. Mobile consolidation – from 4 down to 3-MNOs – does not only lead to higher mobile prices, it may also lead to higher fiber broadband prices.

The state of 5G&4G pricing in 50 EU&OECD mobile markets - 1H2025

In markets with only 3 mobile network operators (3-MNO markets) where monthly prices for 5G&4G voice-data plans are in average 2-3x higher than in 4-MNO markets consumers pay every year billions of Euros in excessive fees 'oligopoly rents'. This is a massive wealth transfer from consumers to operator executives/shareholders.

Mobile monthly prices in Euro markets fell by 53% the last decade, in Finland prices went up by 42% - 2025

While mobile monthly prices fell by 53% in average across the 23 Euro markets, prices fell in 21 out of the 23 markets, in Finland prices went up 42% the last decade. The average monthly price of 5G&4G voice-data plans with at least 1000 minutes fell 53% the last ten years across the 23 European mobile markets that use the Euro, from € 42 in the 1H2014 down to € 20 in 1H2024. In Finland, the average monthly price went up by 42% from € 24 in the 1H2014 to € 34 in the 1H2024.

The following authorities have acquired access to Rewheel's research: The European Commission Directorate for Competition, the United States Department of Justice, the New York, California and many other US State Attorney General Offices, the national competition authorities of Canada, Australia, the Netherlands and Greece, the Ministry of Economic Affairs of the Netherlands, the Ministry of Industry and Trade of Czechia, the Korean Electronics and Telecommunication Research Institute, the sector regulators of the United Kingdom, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Finland, Portugal, Ireland and Members of the Canadian House of Commons.

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